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Gurukul Kangri Vishwavidyalaya
HARDWAR

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H. J. Jackson Coleridge's *Biographia*

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Anna Makkonen Detecting a Diary

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Contributors

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ISSN 0162–4962

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1984

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Sketches From Life

Carl Rollyson 203 God Bless Kitty Kelly, Or, Biography High and Low

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Steven V. Hunsaker 437 Nation, Family, and Language in Victor Perera's *Rites* and Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior*

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Sketches From Life

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Scholars and authors sometimes lament that broadcast versions of written biographies are inaccurate or simplistic. This essay considers the intellectual dilemmas of presenting lives in broadcast formats, particularly radio, focusing on audience, function, and representation. How much fiddling with facts and milieu is permissible in the adaptive process? How can writers ensure integrity of their material when broadcast?

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Editor's Note

With this issue, *Biography: An Interdisciplinary Quarterly* moves into its twentieth volume, and while regular readers will have noted a number of recent editorial changes, and will encounter several more in this and future issues, the journal remains committed to "presenting new information, sharper definitions, fresh interpretations, and well-argued evaluations," just as founding editor George Simson promised it would in that first Winter issue of 1978.

Some of the changes have enhanced already existing features. Under the direction of our Review Editor, Marie-José Fassiotto, the number of publications surveyed in *Reviewed Elsewhere*, and the number of editors supplying the abstracts, have both increased. Recently added features include *Lifelines*, a place for conference, publishing, and grant announcements; and with this issue, *Sketches from Life*, which will provide a home for shorter essays of more general or topical interest.

The physical changes in this issue result from moving to in-house, camera-ready production. In many sections you will find the actual text slightly larger, and thus more legible. We've also added illustrations, and on occasion, some more sophisticated graphics.

Perhaps the greatest changes, however, are the consequence of e-mail and the internet. Inexpensive and instantaneous communication with our contributors and readers has allowed for more timely and efficient processing of submissions, and far more collaboration in the editing process. A Center for Biographical Research homepage, which will debut on the net before the next issue of *Biography* appears, should help us find even more readers and contributors, and prove to be a useful resource for students and practitioners of life-writing as well.

With these additions to a firm and tested foundation, *Biography* should be ready for its next twenty years as a forum for the best writing on life-writing.

Craig Howes

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To remember is not only the act of not forgetting but the act of not being forgotten, just as remembering the past as utopian cultural terrain reveals the very conditions of cultural dislocation that made a necessity of retrospective communitarian idealization.

— Genaro M. Padilla, *My History, Not Yours*

I came to Comala because I was told that my father, a certain Pedro Páramo, was living there. My mother told me so, and I promised her I would come to see him as soon as she died. . . . She told me, "Don't ask him for anything that isn't ours. Just for what he should have given me and didn't. Make him pay for the way he forgot us."

— Juan Rulfo, *Pedro Páramo*

Canción Mexicana

Mi abuelo, al tomar el café
Me hablaba de Juárez y de Porfirio,
Los Zuavos y los plateados.
Y el mantel olía a pólvora.

Mi padre, al tomar la copa,
Me hablaba de Zapata y de Villa,
Soto y Gama y los Flores Magón.
Y el mantel olía a pólvora.

Yo me quedo callado:
De quién podría hablar?[1]

— Octavio Paz

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Heroes and Orphans: Testimonial Memory as Resistance and Repression in Francisco Róbles Pérez's "Memorias"

Vincent Pérez

Chicano literary studies have increasingly focused attention on Mexican American autobiography. Since 1988, when a special issue of *The Americas Review* entitled "U.S. Hispanic Autobiography" appeared, commentators have examined its status as a distinct genre, and explored the socioideological and cultural dimensions of its nineteenth- and twentieth-century texts.[2] Since many of Chicano literature's foundational texts are autobiographies, or fictions in large measure autobiographical, critics of Mexican American writing have always had to wrestle with the nature of autobiographical narratives.[3] At the same time, Luis Leal's pathbreaking work in Chicano literary criticism has directed his successors toward the archaeological endeavor of recovering that vast catalog of Mexican American autobiographical narratives which have remained unpublished or unavailable to a wide audience.[4] Genaro Padilla's *My History, Not Yours* follows both critical paths. Not only does he proclaim the need for "the archival recovery, editing, translation, and publication of this body of foundational literary discourse," which in his own case revolves around that set of Mexican American texts, most still unpublished, collected during the 1870s by the California historian Hubert H. Bancroft, but Padilla also demands, from himself and others, "critical and interpretive activity that shall establish the discursive genealogy (its continuities as well as discontinuities) of our literary traditions" (7).

Drawing on the work of Padilla and other scholars of Chicano autobiography, I would like to examine Francisco Róbles Pérez's "Memorias," an unpublished journal of personal reminiscences, written between 1990 and 1992, by a Mexican American immigrant.[5] Born in 1908 in the state of Zacatecas,

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Mexico, Pérez is a former farm laborer. He is also my paternal grandfather. The 250-page manuscript, seventy of which have been transcribed from the original handwriting and translated from the Spanish, recounts his childhood in Mexico, his emigration at the age of thirteen to the United States, and his youth as a farm worker and immigrant in Southern California. I would like to amplify Padilla's work by examining not only the nostalgic cast of my grandfather's account, but also a second family narrative which "Memorias" effectively suppresses—a narrative which foregrounds gender and class conflicts in turn-of-the-century Mexican hacienda society.

My interest in this project developed in a rather unorthodox fashion. While transcribing my grandfather's manuscript, quite by chance I became involved in a clash between two branches of my family, which took place at the funeral of my "Aunt," Isabel "Chavela" Róbles.[6] The source of the conflict was a second version of Pérez history offered by the Róbleses, a group of relatives whose genealogy in the later nineteenth century and the Mexican revolutionary period is closely interwoven with the Pérez family line. Largely suppressed in my family until comments at Chavela's funeral dramatically brought its truth to light, the Róbles narrative led me to question the ideological contradictions, rhetorical strategies, and sociohistorical particularities of "Memorias." In this essay I will first show how certain counterhegemonic socioideological articulations embedded in nostalgic memory make "Memorias" a perfect example of Padilla's model. My second and broader objective, however, is to show that as Padilla carries out his project to restore the dignity and integrity of the lives of early Mexican American autobiographers, and to extend the Chicano literary canon into the nineteenth century, he almost inevitably resuppresses underlying class and gender contradictions in California (Mexican) hacienda society—a suppression most notable in his account of the Mexican American politician, rancher, and author, Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo.

Padilla proposes a sociohistorical reading of autobiographies which refuses to treat reductively that range of cultural and ideological meanings which his groundbreaking study displays in these texts. *My History, Not Yours* urges contemporary Chicano critics not to dismiss nineteenth-century Mexican American autobiographies simply because, as the

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products of a social elite dispossessed by Anglo American conquest and colonialism, their authors often nostalgically embrace early Mexican hacienda society instead of providing examples of "heroic narrative resistance" (39). Padilla argues that when colonized by the United States after the U.S.-Mexican War of 1846–1848, Mexicans "immediately gave utterance to the threat of social erasure" at the hands of a foreign culture and imposed political system (4). Critics dealing with narratives of that era must "examine the various ways in which autobiographical expression emerged from social rupture and was formed within a matrix of dislocation, fear, and uncertainty" (10). Calling their works "narratives of dispossession," Padilla convincingly suggests that "nostalgia for an earlier world produced not a non-critical reaction to loss, but an oppositional response to displacement, albeit a response often deeply mediated by a language of accommodation" (x).

My History, Not Yours thus uncovers a "retrospective narrative habit" in nineteenth-century Mexican American autobiographies which "goes beyond reconstructing an individual life." Instead, such a life "is measured within a communitarian configuration and against the disruption of identity as identity is situated within an imagined cultural community of the past" (232). For the Vallejo family, for example, the wealthiest and most powerful in pre-1848 "alta California," U.S. annexation of Mexico's northern region meant economic dispossession and disenfranchisement. This economic and political disempowerment at the hands of Anglo American encroachers brought rapid cultural fragmentation and displacement for the entire Mexican American population. As Padilla notes about Vallejo's remarkable personal and historical narrative, "Recuerdos históricos y personales tocante a la alta California" [Personal and Historical Remembrances of Alta California] (1875), "the autobiographical act, therefore, becomes a tense ritual of gathering and sorting the relics of the communal past, narratively reifying the cultural legacy while rearranging the national one, proclaiming a desire to become an American but doing so in a language and discourse of opposition" (89).

Following Padilla's critical paradigm, I attend first to my grandfather's nostalgic idealization of hacienda life in prerevolutionary Mexico. Rather than mark this aspect of the text with an ideological label, however, I will, as Padilla

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suggests, measure the utopian aspects of my grandfather's account against 1) his dislocation and dispossession as a child, buffeted by the social upheaval of the Mexican Revolution, and 2) the economic exploitation and sociocultural fragmentation he experienced as a Mexican immigrant laborer in the U.S. As in many Mexican immigrant narratives and nineteenth-century Mexican American autobiographies, nostalgia for an "idealized and unobtainable" past serves a fundamental oppositional function in "Memorias," certainly enacting an imaginative communion with the narrator's lost family and community, but also articulating "resistance to cultural evisceration" in the U.S. Or as Padilla puts it, nostalgia serves "the reintegrative psychic and social need for sustaining an idea of the past and for fixing a version of history within a cultural text that would mark historical presence in the face of erasure" (16).

My next level of analysis, however, responds to my accidental encounter with the Róbles narrative to show that while correct in defending early Mexican American autobiographies from the charge of indulging in the "hacienda syndrome,"[7] Padilla is in important ways too respectful of these foundational histories emerging from male members of the pre-1848 California (Mexican) elite. Within my own family, the Róbles's oral narrative turned my grandfather's text into a terrain of intense contestation, challenging his nostalgic memory in ways that cannot be contained by Padilla's theoretical framework. As I evaluate Padilla's usefulness for understanding my grandfather's complex deployment of nostalgia, that recovered Róbles counterhistory, which foregrounds women's stories and declares my greatgrandfather's complicitous, and even criminal, role within the repressive hacienda economy, inevitably moves to the foreground. Recovering this suppressed, antinostalgic counterversion of Dominga Róbles—who according to her family narrative was raped by her brother-in-law, Lira Pérez, in 1912—not only rehistoricizes my grandfather's representation of his father's life, but like Rosaura Sánchez's recent analysis of the California "testimonios," challenges Padilla's historicized "close" readings of early Mexican American autobiography.

My interest in these foundational narratives obviously constitutes part of a larger genealogical project to uncover an unclear family and community history. But further, though my

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own family's narrative is no more representative of the Mexican American past than any other Chicano family's, I have found that investigating my own background has helped me better negotiate the history of Mexican American society as a whole. Peeling back the layers of my family's Chicano and Mexicano history has, for instance, strongly convinced me that whether narrated by my grandfather, by other Mexican American grandparents and families, or by Chicano fiction writers, our collective Mexican American past remains incomplete, often suppressed, and untranscribed.

Like members of the Buendia clan, who struggle to read and translate Melquíades's encoded parchments in Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, we have only begun to decipher our history and escape the labyrinthine "city of mirrors." Though such contemporary works as Alejandro Morales's historical novels and Chicana writings which deconstruct and historicize Chicano/Mexicano patriarchy stand as exceptions,[8] too many of our fiction writers seem unengaged by the conflictive power relations to be found in our not so distant Mexican social history. As we have searched for our own origins, our Mexican cultural legacy which has been objectified, denigrated, or destroyed by a white supremacist culture ever since the U.S. annexation of northern Mexico in 1848, too often we have read our *abuelos'* (grandparents) stories uncritically or failed to pursue these histories wherever they may lead. Just as so many autobiographies by our nineteenth-century ancestors reify a pre-American communal religiocultural inheritance in the face of cultural rupture and dispossession, so too do some of our most incisive and informed writers and cultural critics today place their faith in a utopian vision of a harmonious Mexican cultural and spiritual homeland. Even Padilla, though he foregrounds the constructed, even fictional, character of all Mexican American autobiography, himself evades but cannot help but evoke the profound ideological contradictions, arising from nostalgic desire, in these nineteenth-century texts.

My History, Not Yours shows that while Mexican history has been reified in these autobiographical accounts, they nevertheless represent an honorable Mexican American historical and cultural legacy preserved for, and available to, later generations. What is missing from his model is an explanation of how and why, in sociohistorical terms, key aspects of our history were

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mythologized or suppressed. Having recovered a part of the encoded "parchments" and embraced it as our own, we must now decipher, interpret, and historicize the remainder of the text. By looking at my grandfather's "Memorias" and the family clash that called them into question, I hope to begin carrying out this task.

II

My father had three nieces, named Ramirez, who were distinguished, older women in their forties, all unmarried. They were couturiers. They owned a fashion shop in the commercial zone downtown, where they sold expensive, custom-made dresses for young women and suits for men. Jerez was the [commercial] center for the entire outlying hacienda community, and so their shop was the only one of its kind for thirty kilometers, or more, around the town. These women belonged to high society . . . and lived in a mansion—surrounded by bougainvilleas—with electricity, a garden with beautiful plants, and a swimming pool. You'll probably ask how they had a pool in the center of town, but I'm one step ahead of you. In that part of Jerez, there was a stream called the Rio Chiquito, which passed close to their mansion, and two kilometers away was the Rio Grande. But let's return for a moment to the house. My father and I were often invited to go and dine with these sisters. You see, my family had all of the same luxuries as they during the 1890–1912 period. The Ramirez sisters were one of the illustrious families [of Jerez] that have now passed into history, but I remember them as a part of my own family, of whom I am very, very proud. . . .

The disturbers of the peace, that is, the revolutionaries, wouldn't leave my father alone. They wanted to assassinate him. Many times he escaped by the skin of his teeth. Other times he hid in wells . . . we finally escaped from Jerez under the cover of night by burro—one for each of us—so that our loyal Mexican "brethren," who one day were our employees and we the employers, could not detect us. . . . So departed a citizen of Jerez who was at one time a descendant of the most prosperous and landed hacendados in the entire valley of Zacatecas. . . . We left all of our property behind; it was many, many years before I slept in a bed again.

—Francisco R. Pérez, "Memorias"

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> Domination and suppression, the reality of the group's material and social condition, is often narratively occluded, or transformed into a life in an imaginary pre-American past through which aristocratic pretense, genealogical invention, and political self-deceit articulate resistance in language often ideologically deaf to itself.
>
> —Genaro M. Padilla, *My History, Not Yours*

I began to delve into my family's history when, as an undergraduate, I went to Mexico for two years to study Latin American literature. Prior to my visit, I had come to recognize that I could not reveal certain legends about my Mexican ancestors to my Chicano university friends without risking undermining my own cultural authenticity as a working-class Chicano. I often secretly questioned the genealogical lore narrated by some of my Chicano college friends—not the humble origins of their "antepasados" (ancestors), but the romantic representation of their ancestors' role in the Mexican Revolution (1910–1920), invariably as peasant combatants. I understood that most of my Mexican American friends probably were descended from "los de abajo" (those at the bottom)—to use the title of Mariano Azuela's famous novel. But after I began to read modern Mexican literature I felt that we had, as a group, become alienated from our history.[9] When speaking with my Chicano friends or family members, I either held my peace about my grandfather's ambiguous past, or revised my history. Rather than acknowledge my grandparents' unspoken pain and profound ambivalence about the revolution and its aftermath, I portrayed my paternal grandfather, who emigrated from Mexico in 1921, as an impoverished "campesino" (rural peasant) whose family had sympathized with Pancho Villa's revolutionary insurrectionists.[10]

This romantic narrative of origins was not entirely a fabrication; however, those omissions which marked the unconscious ideological content of my family's genealogy found parallels in some of the Chicano literary works I had read up to that time. While studying in Mexico I first read the fictions of such modern Mexican authors as Juan Rulfo (*Pedro Páramo*, 1955) and José Revueltas (*El luto humano* [Human Mourning], 1943). Long before the poets and writers of the Chicano/a movement began their project to revitalize and embrace our

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Mexican American cultural origins, these earlier writers had deconstructed the Mexican national mythologies and ideologies surrounding both the revolution and the prerevolutionary period. This critical engagement with history by Latin American writers achieved its apotheosis in García Márquez's classic novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, a work clearly indebted to both Rulfo and Revueltas, and thus one which speaks to Chicano history as well as to the more general Spanish American past.

Though García Márquez, Rulfo, Revueltas, or even Faulkner do not hesitate to delve into the labyrinthine convolutions of historical memory, I have encountered in some Chicano narratives a reluctance to critical genealogical inquiry into the Mexican past. Even in my own historical research I find myself drawing back from certain investigative paths, denying myself the critical freedom needed to approach the "truth" about history. (In an earlier version of this very essay I unintentionally (re)suppressed the story of the rape of Dominga Róbles, and thus downplayed my great-grandfather's complicity in the hacienda economy.) And as "Memorias" implicitly demonstrates, many of my family, and particularly my grandparents, have been displeased to see me using my education, which they made possible, to retrieve and expose long-buried secrets.

Chicano writers have not only (un)consciously suppressed and nostalgically mythologized distant Mexican American history, but also marginalized it in their attempt to address urgent contemporary cultural and political issues. In a remarkable interview, our most accomplished fiction writer, Tomás Rivera, dismisses the need to conceptualize, let alone interrogate, a collective Mexican American historical consciousness:

> I don't really feel that I have a strong relationship with [Mexican culture]. . . . I read the Mexican classics . . . [and] I felt a strong affinity to [them]. When I visited Mexico, it reinforced that feeling. Then I began to realize that I'm not a Mexican. All of these feelings are a result of learning, not of growing up in Mexico with all *its* problems, *its* history, *its* beauty, and all *its* affinities. I thought, "It's not really mine. I know [Mexico] as mine, now, because I've learned it. I don't actually have it, nor have I lived it." After that I had to come back and say this is reality right here. . . . The fact is that if I had not gotten a college education I would know very little about Mexico.[11]

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These remarks, which capture the fundamental historical and cultural paradox that Mexican Americans as a group have lived, at one level recall Richard Rodriguez's famous renunciation of the "private" Mexican side of his personality in his *Hunger of Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez* (1984). Even though in all his writing Rivera mounts a sustained materialist critique of hegemonic and white supremacist ideology, while *Hunger* embraces a middle-class assimilationist ethic, I would suggest that both writers arrive at a similar *cultural* impasse precisely because they do not retrieve and draw upon the multiple and contending (suppressed) histories which comprise the Mexican American collective historical consciousness. While Rivera's novel *And the Earth Did Not Devour Him* (1971) recovers a communal (farm worker) cultural memory, neither author thematizes Mexican (American) origins and ancestry.

My genealogical research attempts just such a recuperative project, and in fact, my grandfather's memoirs are themselves the result of the investigation into my family's history I began fifteen years ago while studying in Mexico. Before this time, I could not communicate fluently with my grandfather in his native language. In the late 1980s, I began a series of taped interviews with him, which over the course of six years developed into a full-length written autobiography. Though I had not imagined, nor do I believe today, that as a child I had "lost" part of my history or culture because of the language barrier, these lengthy interviews were my opportunity to establish a closer relationship with my grandfather in the language of his forebears.

Since I could only visit my grandfather twice a year, on one occasion I asked him to begin writing down the stories of his life in Mexico and as an immigrant. Thirty-five notebooks, filled with Spanish prose written in the stilted style of a child and carefully numbered to avoid chronological confusion, have been the result. Noting that his education "was only three years in primary school" (3), my grandfather repeatedly apologizes for his "poor orthography and grammar." And yet he is proud of his knowledge, drawn from his lifelong experience in the real world. "My philosophy is my own—I didn't go to any university," he states early in the narrative—"What I'm saying I've compiled from a long and sometimes bumpy journey over the face of our mother Earth" (26). Although I have estimated

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that the edited manuscript will be 250 pages, the final version may be longer. I have not transcribed many of the post-1935 era notebooks, nor have I determined precisely how the hours of tape-recorded interviews—which complement the written account—will be integrated into the text.

Though I first encouraged my grandfather to write his story, and I now serve as its translator and editor, the journal itself is entirely my grandfather's work.[12] It begins with his childhood in the prerevolutionary period, which he portrays as a pastoral and idyllic life in the hacienda community. It ends with the account of his attempt to rear five young children on farm worker wages during the U.S. depression. "Memorias" thus spans roughly thirty years of Mexican and Mexican American history.

My grandfather, Francisco, was the son of a bookkeeper named Juan Lira Pérez, a business associate in the 1880s and 1890s of a group of landowning "hacendados" (ranchers) near the city of Zacatecas in central Mexico. Though born into relative privilege in an era of socioeconomic polarization which set the "hacendado" elite apart from the masses of peasants and laborers, my grandfather's comfortable early status was short-lived. Orphaned at eleven, he was forced to fend for himself during a time of social and economic upheaval.[13] Emigrating to southern California in 1921, he worked for more than fifty years as a ranch laborer and field hand. Forty-two years were spent at Rancho Sespe, a 6,000-acre citrus ranch owned by the Spalding sports equipment manufacturing family in Ventura County. My grandfather had a number of agricultural occupations at this ranch:

> I picked fruit for twenty years, then, as a gardener, planted vegetables and flowers and trees. . . . I once helped dynamite a mountain on which the owner built a cabin; and for two full years I worked closely with an agronomy engineer to build a nine-hole golf course, which Mister Keith Spalding had ordered. (40)

My grandfather and his wife, Concepción, reared a family in the ranch's workers' camp, Sespe Village, where some 150 Mexican families lived.[14] Unable to return to Mexico and reclaim his father's land and status because of the civil war and its economic aftermath, my grandfather remained within the ranks of agricultural laborers in a country where Mexicans were not

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only cultural outsiders, but exploited as laborers and racially excluded. His family's fall from the Mexican "upper class" due to the war's disruption of the hacienda economy left my grandfather with a dual class identity. He could thus sing the praises of the revolutionary leader Pancho Villa (1878–1923), yet also revile him as a bandit who had disenfranchised Juan Lira Pérez and forced young Francisco to leave his homeland for good.

In the early sections of "Memorias" my grandfather imaginatively reconstructs the life of that fifty-two-year-old established businessman and accountant who was his father. In these early passages and elsewhere, my grandfather harks back to life in a supposedly harmonious rural community in a prerevolutionary and "colonial" Mexico. He was born in 1908, on the eve of civil war, to "Don Juan Lira Pérez and Doña Juliana Róbles de Pérez," in the "beautiful small town of Jerez, in the state of Zacatecas" (1). Both "direct descendants of the seventeenth-century Spanish pioneers and founders of Jerez," his parents had deep roots in that region. My grandfather remembers his father saying once that his own "father, Santa Ana Pérez, and uncles were the original founders and settlers of the town" (2). "Memorias" thus forges a genealogical link between Lira Pérez and the Spanish colonial settlers of Mexico. Assuming that the region's first settlers had been "conquistadors," my grandfather concludes, despite a vast chronological discrepancy, that his grandfather must have come from Spain and the town's name may have been "inspired by the town of Jerez de la Frontera in southern Spain" (2).[15] This Spanish link reappears at the time of my uncles' and my father's births, for these light-haired infants are cited as proof that the blood "from my Mexican ancestors, descendants of the [Spanish] 'gachupines,' continues" (32).

On the surface, these passages seem to reflect little more than those contradictory racial and class biases rooted in the Spanish conquest and colonial domination of Mexico's indigenous peoples which are still widespread in Mexico to this day. Steeped in the nineteenth-century cultural mores which denigrate indigenous origins, rather than acknowledging his "mestizo" (Spanish/Indian) cultural and ethnic heritage, my grandfather claims his descent from the "racially pure" Spanish conquerors.[16] Other sociocultural motivations and forces contribute, however, to this problematical aspect of my

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grandfather's autobiography. His nostalgia for a legendary Mexican (Spanish) world, and more specifically his construction through narrative of a childhood and youth spent within this "mythic" past, are examples of what Padilla has called the author's "epistemological ground of subjectivity" (158). Like other early Mexican American autobiographers, my grandfather sets this pre-American cultural and social originary ground of being and memory against the nightmare of Mexican life under the Anglo American sociocultural regime.

Let me briefly explain how my grandfather's effort to reclaim his origins leads me to Padilla's theoretical model. Coming six years after the death of his mother, Juliana Róbles Pérez, and definitively marking the end of his hacienda childhood and the start of his hardscrabble existence as a "descalzo" (barefoot waif), the death of his father is the defining moment of my grandfather's life. Nostalgic desire is thus interwoven with retrospective longing. As a son, my grandfather wishes to embrace a father and a community that he knew only in childhood. By retrieving his father's myth from the social and familial ruins of Mexican history, my grandfather through testimonial remembrance reenacts that short-lived relationship which his father's unexpected death in 1919 abruptly ended. But if we accept orphanhood as a figuration embodying deeper sociohistorical and cultural forces, the death of Lira Pérez can also stand as that traumatic moment of social and cultural "rupture" which Padilla identifies as crucial to understanding the Mexican American autobiographical consciousness. In the figure of the "descalzo," my grandfather alludes to his suddenly precarious socioeconomic status:

> The person writing this [account] was a "descalzo," because the first shoes that I owned were bought sometime in 1910. Since my feet grew fast, I couldn't use them for very long. I didn't own another pair until I crossed the U.S. border in 1921. Someone bought me a secondhand pair there for twenty-five cents, but they were too big for me. When I put them on without socks and walked, my feet sweat and slipped. The noise they made when I crossed the border at Juarez made me think that someone was following me. When I recall this event, it now seems both curious and fitting to me that I write it down, so that you know where Don Francisco came from. (15)

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My grandfather uses "descalzo" not only to convey his desperate situation when he crossed the border, but also the many sociocultural and ideological transitions he has been forced to make since then.[17] The first shift was of course from membership in the "high" society of the Mexican landed upper class to the status of a homeless orphan at the height of the revolution. The second took him from his life as a servant for a wealthy Mexican family to that of an impoverished, marginalized immigrant laborer in a foreign country.

But as the above passage suggests, for my grandfather "descalzo" also has a tragic-comic and picaresque quality to it, for unlike most Mexican immigrant autobiographies, my grandfather shares with nineteenth-century Mexican American California writers the distant remembrance of an actual "upper class" hacienda past. Orphanhood thus functions in my grandfather's account at two discursive levels. On the one hand, it represents his abrupt separation from his father's economically secure world, and soon after from the Mexican culture of his ancestors. The "descalzo" is, therefore, a prince in disguise. On the other hand, "Memorias" is obviously an immigrant narrative as well, which charts his struggles as a destitute Mexican laborer in what he increasingly comes to view as a materialistic and white supremacist society. At this level, orphanhood signifies his decades-long cultural and socio-economic alienation as an exploited immigrant in the U.S. He will thus always be a "descalzo."

The contestatory Róbles narrative will expose certain sociohistorical deceptions in this notion of orphanhood. For the moment, though, let us consider the usefulness of Padilla's paradigm for understanding this figure, and "Memorias" in total. Padilla has established that early Mexican American autobiographies, as well, he suggests, as modern Mexican immigrant autobiographical narratives, exhibit a "consciousness split by contending sociocultural regimes" (51). This "double-consciousness" originates in that moment when the Mexican American author's pre-American religiocultural identity comes under the dominating influence of an Anglo-American sociocultural regime. For the nineteenth-century Mexicans living in what was once northern Mexico and is now the southwest U.S., this moment came violently with the 1848 American military victory over Mexico and the annexation of its northern region.

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As my grandfather's memoir shows, an equally sharp cultural break has taken place among twentieth-century Mexican immigrants. Symbolized by the border crossing, this modern rupture results from both the forced emigration from the "homeland" and the inevitable cultural accommodation Mexican immigrants had to make in a country with fundamentally antagonistic sociocultural and religious traditions.

All of the many studies examining Mexican immigration to the U.S. agree that a huge number of migrants arrived during this century's first three decades. Mario Barrera, for example, cites an estimate that by 1928 more than one-tenth of Mexico's population had moved to the U.S. (68). In accounting for this large-scale migration, Barrera notes that while the political upheavals created by the ten-year-long Mexican Revolution caused a great many to immigrate—particularly "those who happened to be on the losing side at a given moment"—economic and social factors were perhaps more significant, for "A large number of agricultural workers during this time were displaced from the land as the process of [Porfirian] modernization was ruthlessly pursued" (68). Furthermore, between 1875 and 1910 the Mexican population increased by approximately fifty percent. As Friedrich Katz remarks, "the number of laborers available to central Mexican haciendas greatly increased . . . as the massive expropriations . . . created a new landless proletariat, which the limited industry in most parts of central Mexico could not absorb" (Barrera 68).

In *My History, Not Yours,* Padilla focuses on the dramatic break in sociocultural self-consciousness typically represented in later Mexican immigrant autobiographical narratives by the border crossing. Refusing to dismiss California "Hispano" texts as politically and ideologically self-deceiving, he views their nostalgic impulse as a complex narrative strategy with a hidden counter-hegemonic cultural objective. As we shall see in my grandfather's narrative, though admittedly shot through with ideological contradictions, this strategy sustains the Mexican American autobiographer's pre-American and communitarian cultural identity in the face of threats from Anglo American social institutions. Viewed in this light, my grandfather's efforts to link himself to Spanish colonial forebears invokes the powerful cultural presence of his Mexican ancestors. Such a legacy grants my grandfather and his largely assimilated

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Mexican American children and grandchildren, a cultural identity in the face of "orphanhood" in Mexico *and* the U.S.

Like the nineteenth-century Mexican American California autobiographers, who measure the past according to their "present" socioeconomic and cultural dilemmas, my grandfather foregrounds his struggles with poverty, displacement, and "slavelike" experiences as an immigrant farm worker. Without seeking pity, in an understated tone he relates the brutal, inhuman work, and his own felt status in the U.S. as a victim, a commodity, and a deracinated and alienated figure apparently without hope or future. "Memorias" identifies three forces of rigid exclusion and severe abuse: the brutal exploitation of Mexican American agricultural laborers, the suppression of their efforts to organize a union, and the racial segregation they had to endure at every level of society.[18] Taken together, these forces construct my grandfather's depression-era American sociocultural, economic, and personal plight.

Grandfather's account of his union activities in the early 1930s epitomizes this alienated condition:

> I joined a society of united Mexican workers and started to work on its behalf. We fought to defend the human, civic, and economic rights of Mexican agricultural workers. But we were a small group, perhaps forty in number, and none of us was educated nor had funds to sustain the organization. We asked ten cents in dues from each worker's paycheck. We eventually called a strike to try to improve our lives, but it was in vain. We lost after two months. Many of the strikers were thrown in jail and others were physically abused on the picket line. In one confrontation, the police used tear gas against us. In this struggle, [the ranchers] had no respect for women or children. Our only recourse was the Mexican Consulate in Los Angeles, but [the ranchers] later blocked our communication with this office. (33)

Because of this activism, my grandfather was blacklisted by Orange County ranchers. Forced to move his family to Ventura County, some 80 miles away, he was soon hired to pick grapefruit, for 28 cents an hour, near the town of Fillmore. My grandfather recalled that the foreman asked him where he had moved from. When my grandfather said Orange County, the foreman asked if he was a striker. My grandfather of course said no: "If I had said yes, they wouldn't have given me work . . . and at

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that time I had four children to support and feed, all of school age with the exception of the youngest, who was three" (42).

A second encounter underscored for my grandfather that, although his location had changed, his social position remained the same:

> After we settled into our little house in the workers' camp at Rancho Sespe—the last great hacienda in California—I met an American rancher and foreman whose property bordered the camp. He introduced himself, then said to me, "I hope that your family, especially your children, respect my property and don't trespass beyond that wire fence." He added these humiliating words: "Any individual who doesn't own a piece of land, or at least, a home in which to live, is not worthy of being a citizen of any country." We were thus eating the bitter bread of the exiled. (35)

For my grandfather these two exchanges capture something crucial about his life. "Why was man born?" he asks, "To struggle, just as birds were born to fly." His description of himself at twenty-seven as "ambitious, genial, self-confident, humorous, and above all, hardworking" (34) makes it clear that my grandfather felt more than up to that struggle.

And yet, as Esther Pérez Doran, Francisco's daughter and eldest child, and my aunt, wrote in 1965 for a college class, life in Sespe Village continually tested the Pérez family's strength, spirit, and resilience. According to Esther, the village community lived under a "feudal system" completely dominated by the ranch owner, Mr. Spalding. Esther juxtaposes this American "hacendado" to her own family's dire living conditions and her father's brutal work as a farm laborer:

> Once a month the lord and master, the owner of Rancho Sespe, would make his rounds on horseback—on a white horse—and look down at his "peasants." An "edict" would first go out to the village stating when Mr. Spalding would arrive so that we could prepare by watering our beautiful yards and by putting on our best Sunday clothes. But I made it a point never to appear to show any interest in this event, in this wealthy man who was the giver of all things in Sespe. I already knew better; I had seen my father, black with dust and soaked with perspiration, come home from picking lemons and oranges after a hot day. For this backbreaking work he was paid the great sum of a couple of dollars a day and allowed to rent a three room house without heat, without indoor water, and without indoor plumbing (the homes were very cold and

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> damp; in fact, I am still trying to get warm after all those cold years). My mother worked in the ranch's packing house at Sespe, where the pay was worse; later, my young brothers also worked picking fruit. At Sespe, the Mexican community had a life without any hope for the future. I hated the people who were responsible for this, who made my father and mother work so hard for a crust of bread and a dried tortilla. But my father showed that while a man's body may be economically bound, his spirit is not; although he had only a third grade education, he read avidly and passed this habit along to his children.[19]

My grandfather's idealization of a mythic Mexican homeland, therefore, not only represents a solidarity with the immigrant community sharing his origins, but also stands as a defense against the perpetual "threat of social erasure" by colonizing American sociocultural and economic formations (Padilla, *My History* 6). His imaginative return to the pre-American pastoral environment of his "abuelos" (grandparents) and his ancestors' hacienda society must be understood in relation to Esther's description and the earlier comments like the rancher's. This nostalgic recuperation reaffirms cultural and genealogical continuity in the face of my grandfather's forced separation from that world as a child, and his continued alienation from both Mexican and American society as an adult.

Just as his orphanhood may be read as a figuration for the cultural fragmentation of all Mexican immigrants in the U.S., the reconstituted topography of rural Zacatecas stands as the originary "epistemological ground" of his cultural subjectivity. Situated "exactly in the center of the Mexican Republic" (2), the Zacatecas region where he was born is for my grandfather the geographic and cultural "heartland" of the nation. As descendants of its Spanish settlers, he and his father are thus "native sons" of a region which, according to popular sentiment in Mexico to this day, embodies the Mexican national character. When recalling his visit to the city of Zacatecas shortly after his family was forced to leave Jerez in 1914, my grandfather asks the reader's patience as he not only "describes the topography of that great capital," but also strategically conflates this topography with Mexico's Spanish colonial history. "The city was founded in 1600 when the Spaniards discovered silver there," he explains, "it is situated in a small valley surrounded by mountains. The most prominent is the 'Bufa' mountain,

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which contains the richest silver mine on the American continent" (5). What he doesn't note, however, is what the historian Fernando Enrique Cardoso has demonstrated in his study of economic dependency in Latin America. While acknowledging that during the thirty-five year reign of Porfirio Díaz (1876–1911), "Mexico recovered much of its economic dynamism thanks chiefly to renewed exploitation of its silver wealth," Cardoso also notes that by 1914, when my grandfather saw the "Bufa" for the first time, three-quarters of Mexico's mines "belonged to foreigners" (105). My grand-father's pastoral and communal vision of Zacatecas shows no sign of the enormous concentration of property in the hands of politicians, foreign speculators, and surveying companies, which Cardoso finds characteristic of the time (106).[20] Nor does he mention here the brutal side of the earlier colonial period. For my grandfather, his Spanish ancestors, the Mexican "heartland," and even the outlying terrain of his hacienda society together establish a mythic, heroic, and prosperous Mexican past, rather than a photograph of disjunction and exploitation.

Other references to prerevolutionary Jerez add to his portrait of a legendary land populated by descendants of illustrious Spanish founders. Especially powerful are his memories of his father, the principal inhabitant of that "colonial" and late-nineteenth-century world.[21] Since my grandfather left the hacienda where he was raised at age six, stopped regularly attending school at seven, and became orphaned at eleven, his memories of the "prerevolutionary" period probably derive from stories heard as a child from his father. My interviews with my grandfather, and "Memorias" itself, suggest that his knowledge of distant Mexican history comes primarily, though not exclusively, from the same source. Not surprisingly, then, his memories of his father are inseparable from his romantic representation of his hacienda home.

Nor did his father simply embody familial origins; in fact, as Pérez patriarch his overshadowing figure participates in that genealogical and sociocultural rootedness in Mexico which my grandfather traces back to its Mexican (Spanish) colonial "founders." Though my grandfather enjoyed reading imaginative writing, I do not think he had ever read Juan Rulfo or any of the other modern Latin American historical novelists. Nor, though detective fiction as well as the science fiction of

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Jules Verne delighted him, did my grandfather seem fond of sweeping narrative (he once told me that *Don Quixote* had not impressed him because he considered it "fantasy"). Nevertheless my grandfather often describes hacienda society in a manner reminiscent of Juan Rulfo's mythic rendering. At the opening of Rulfo's novel *Pedro Páramo*, for example, when asked which lands near a central Mexican rural town belong to a local "hacendado," a peasant answers with a series of admonitory questions: "See that mountain, the one that looks like a pig's bladder? Good, now look over there. See the ridge of that mountain? Now look over here. See that mountain way off there? Well, all that's the Media Luna, everything you see. And it all belongs to Pedro Páramo" (4). In much the same way, my grandfather notes that in colonial times "people of property didn't measure their property in hectares, parcels, or plots, but rather by how far their vision reached; once these men began to dedicate themselves to the raising of sheep and other livestock, within the course of years, they counted herds in the thousands, if not millions" (2). Here and in many other places as well, my grandfather grants a larger than life quality to that Mexican colonial history which Rulfo both refracts and deconstructs. San Juan de las Calabasas, the hacienda of my grandfather's youth, was his "beloved native village," a place where "everything was the color of roses and all of the food was sweet" (14). This imaginary geocultural terrain stands in sharp opposition to his later cultural uprootedness, permanent forced exile, and "slavelike" experience as a farm laborer. Hacienda life in Jerez was a carefree "vacation" or "adventure," the rural landscape symbolizing the innocence and expansive freedom of childhood.

And in the center of this pastoral landscape stand the boy and his father, whose close relationship, rooted irrevocably in the hacienda world, is conveyed through brief and poignant remembrances of childhood. Early in "Memorias" my grandfather remembers

> asking my father, when I was four or five, the following question: "Tell me how many tortillas I have eaten in my entire life." My father answered, "I'd say about a hundred." Wouldn't you agree that such childish questions, though silly, are at the same time philosophical? (5)

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In this way the pastoral landscape contains within it not only communitarian rootedness, but familial intimacy between father and son. Of course, other relatives inhabit this world as well, providing background on the maternal side of my grandfather's family, and complementing the emphasis on patriarchal lineage. His maternal grandparents, ghostly presences in "Memorias," lived in the hacienda village and took care of him while his father worked. By proudly providing elaborate nineteenth-century names of these "abuelos," Don Ambrosio Róbles (who in fact was his grandfather Don José Róbles's nephew) and Doña Hipólita Macías Róbles (his grandmother), he reasserts cultural continuity and familial pride in the face of their total erasure from the U.S. historical ledger. He insists on carrying such a name forward himself, often referring to himself in "Memorias" as "Don" Francisco, the title his father always affectionately used and thus a constant reminder of his father's love as well as of the writer's "upper-class" hacienda ancestors.

As for his own mother Juliana, daughter of Don José Róbles and Doña Hipólita, my grandfather says that he doesn't remember her at all. She died in 1913, soon after giving birth to her third child; thus the only "mother" my grandfather knew was Doña Hipólita. (In the following section I will address the central roles Juliana and her younger sister Dominga play in "Memorias.") As if to claim for his mother and her parents the same nobility he posited for his father's ancestors, my grandfather asserts that Doña Hipólita and the Róbleses "were one of the grand and illustrious families of that epoch which have now passed into history," relatives "of whom I am very, very proud" (30).[22]

Mexican customs, traditions, and events such as weddings and funerals are also set within the hacienda's retrospective geographic space. Like the landscape, these practices affirm as well the communitarian and familial qualities of my grandfather's pre-U.S. cultural environment. Hacienda weddings, for instance, were "grand events" in which "all families and friends in the community cooperated" (28). The food preparations were highly communal. Some families

> would prepare a cow for the celebration's meal, others two lambs, three pigs, and a few goats—this, of course, doesn't include the dozens of chickens. As for tortillas, no fewer than ten women were grinding corn and making tortillas before

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> and during the celebration. Not only family members came, but the whole community, without any need for invitations. A second party took place the day after, a "tornaboda," with music and more music and dancing. (28)

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This nostalgic vision of Mexican hacienda society is closely linked to that self-contradictory "rupture" when my grandfather, like so many before and after him, crosses the U.S.-Mexican border. In a telling passage about listening to a record by his favorite opera singer, Mario Lanza, grandfather is led to reflect on his ancestral Mexican hacienda community and its Spanish colonial past:

> I feel content in my journey through this life that I did something for my family and that I continue being the "trunk" of the future family tree, [following] those Spanish pioneers who one day gave us a language and a religion—even though, as Bernal Díaz del Castillo said [in his account of the Spanish conquest of Mexico], they came with the cross and the sword. (37)

Although the last line momentarily acknowledges that buried, contradictory historical reality of the Mexican (Spanish) colonial mythos, which the Róbles counternarrative will foreground, "Memorias" elsewhere elides pre-Revolution social conflict. Dwelling on the work's ahistorical projection of an impossibly harmonious communal past, however, is less fruitful than placing it within the wider context of my grandfather's life as a deracinated Mexican who, after seventy years in the "belly of the beast," still views himself and his American-born descendants as displaced "migrants" and "orphans" regrettably alienated from Mexican culture and history. Recording his Mexican (Spanish) colonial heritage is his way of bequeathing to his immediate family and Chicano descendants a connection to a heroic and noble past.

Not simply aristocratic pretense or genealogical self-invention, then, my grandfather's nostalgic desire for a mythic Spanish colonial world is a socially empowering reassertion of cultural continuity and pride, in the face of deeply felt cultural displacement and fragmentation. "With my hand on my chest, Don Francisco is writing this history, our history," he announces early in the narrative, "the 'descalzo' who one day crossed the Rio Grande somewhere near El Paso with his rags on his head—

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and I am not at all ashamed to say this, because it is the truth" (3). Rejecting the shame American cultural formations seek to force upon his Mexican American descendants and community, he implicitly urges his Mexican American readers to follow him in shedding their self-annihilating "gringo" habits. More importantly, by juxtaposing his status as an orphaned "descalzo" with his action as Don Francisco, writing "our history," my grandfather assures that his "nostalgic" narrative must be read in the light of his later American experience of alienation and exploitation.

While specific memories of his father are interwoven throughout my grandfather's vision of hacienda society, other pre-U.S. passages place his father within the more mundane world of day-to-day affairs. Though described throughout as a businessman who worked most of his life as an accountant for "hacendados," Lira Pérez in fact operated several other businesses after his departure from Jerez. At one point he supposedly bought and sold animal bones by the ton. Grandfather remembers more than once accompanying his father to examine train cars filled with bones, which his father was negotiating to purchase. After leaving Jerez, for a time he also owned a butcher shop. As "the only trained business administrator in that region," Lira Pérez before his displacement from Jerez had apparently prospered in the hacienda economy: "He was educated at the university in the state capital in business administration, [and] since he was fifty-two years old when I was born, I imagine that he must have already practiced his profession for more than thirty years when I appeared on the scene" (6). Following this chronology, Lira Pérez would therefore have begun his business career in 1878, two years after the rise to head of state of Porfirio Díaz, the dictator whose name is synonymous with the period of the modern hacienda, and with the widespread socioeconomic injustices and repressions this quasi-feudalistic economy brought about. Although Díaz's thirty-five year reign is a complex historical epoch, he has been credited with bringing modern capitalism to a predominantly rural society. In his analysis of early twentieth-century Mexican emigration to the U.S., Rodolfo Acuña notes that Díaz's policies "encouraged the industrialization of agriculture, mining, and transportation, which led to the uprooting of the Mexican peasants, many of whom moved

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northward" (147). Modernization under Díaz, in short, led to the demise of the communal village and commercialization of the hacienda. And yet, as Fernando Enrique Cardoso points out, since for Diaz "the old hacienda system remained the most effective means of keeping the peasants submissive," he therefore "needed its support" (107). Lira Pérez's career thus spanned the Díaz period of hacienda dominance from 1880 to 1911.[23] Or as grandfather proudly explains, in his father's youth "the great haciendas and latifundios began to be formed . . . and that was exactly where my father first began to practice his profession" (11).

The single extant photograph of Lira Pérez was taken in September 1912 or 1913 during Independence Day celebrations in Jerez. He was fifty-six, a tall, well-dressed, gaunt man who appears to be of higher socioeconomic status than the townsfolk around him. While the aged "campesino" at the extreme left, and most of the others in the photograph wear "sombreros" made of straw, my great-grandfather's "sombrero" appears to be made of felt and displays embroidery on its rim. Dark and weatherworn, his expression stern, he stands in front of what appears to be a patriotic parade, grasping the reins of a wagon drawn by three white horses and decorated with Mexican banners and flags. Though actually well to the right, Lira Pérez seems to be at the center of his community's most important public celebration, while the man in the middle of the photo may be the son of Don Jacinto Carlos, a "hacendado" who employed Lira Pérez. The lower-class folk in the audience behind these two men seem to squeeze into the photograph's frame. At the picture's extreme right stand Lira Pérez's two young sons. My grandfather Francisco, age four or five and dressed in the white clothes of Mexican "campesinos," holds his hand before his face. Marcos, his older half-brother, stares like his father directly into the camera.

By writing his memoirs my grandfather tried to grant "textual permanence" to his father's life and his own (Padilla 4), thus bequeathing to his Mexican American descendants the foundational narrative of their familial and sociocultural origins. At another level, though, he struggled with the need to resist those intangible forces which had led to his fragmented cultural condition in the U.S. Though often eliding the social conflicts of the pre-U.S. past, "Memorias" therefore participates, however

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Jerez, Independence Day, September 1912 or 1913

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deeply mediated by a language of nostalgic reflection, in that critical discourse which Ramón Saldívar has identified in modern Chicano narratives. Notwithstanding its suppressions, if judged first as an immigrant narrative, my grandfather's autobiography joins with other oppositional Chicano works to explore what Saldívar has termed the "imaginary ways in which historical men and women live out their lives in a class society, and how the values, concepts, and ideas purveyed by the mainstream, American culture that tie them to their social functions seek to prevent them from a true knowledge of society as a whole" (*Chicano Narrative* 6). But another layer of the palimpsest of history in "Memorias" remains to be peeled back. As the Róbles family narrative will reveal, my grandfather's representation of Mexican hacienda society both records and obscures its underlying socioeconomic and cultural formations.

III

> It just does not explain. Or perhaps that's it: they don't explain and we are not supposed to know. We have a few old mouth-to-mouth tales; we exhume from old trunks and boxes and drawers letters without salutation or signature, in which men and women who once lived and breathed are now merely initials or nicknames. . . . [The people] are there, yet something is missing . . . you bring them together again and again nothing happens: just the words, the symbols, the shapes themselves, shadowy inscrutable and serene, against that turgid background of a horrible and bloody mischancing of human affairs.
>
> —William Faulkner, *Absalom, Absalom!*

> Fictions and the fiction-making process are a central constituent of the truth of any life as it is lived and of any art devoted to the presentation of that life.
>
> —Paul John Eakin, *Fictions in Autobiography*

> Too many conflicting emotional interests are involved for life ever to be wholly acceptable, and possibly it is the work of the storyteller to rearrange things so that they conform to this end. In any case, in talking about the past, we lie with every breath we take.
>
> —William Maxwell, quoted in Timothy Dow Adams, *Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography*

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An incident which caused an unexpected shift in my recuperating and interpreting "Memorias" offers a cautionary reminder of what recent critics of autobiography have termed the "impulse to self-invention."[24] Certainly, what happened at a relative's funeral underscores Padilla's emphasis on the "centrality of thick socio-historicized readings of formative Mexican American (autobiographical) narratives and the historical particularities of their production" (*My History* xi). One could even see this event as an example of what Padilla calls "discontinuity" in the discursive genealogy of Chicano literary traditions (7). More importantly, though, the funeral encounter I will now discuss strongly suggests that readings, including Padilla's, of early Mexican American autobiographies must be self-critically aware of their own suppressions. As the Róbles family helped to reveal, my grandfather's nostalgic desire worked to conceal iniquities and social conflicts buried deep in his own father's hacienda past. To insure that such powerful, shaping forces do not remain unexamined, scholars who recover and interpret autobiographical narratives by individuals whose "voices have not merely been forgotten . . . but suppressed" (Padilla, *My History* xi) must be constantly aware of the issue of fictionality in autobiographical texts, and must also delve critically into representations of pre-U.S. history. The nostalgic impulse in Mexican American autobiographies is certainly the product of sociocultural rupture and fragmentation, but as Padilla himself has suggested, this impulse constructs a "master" narrative designed to suppress most of what does not conform to the author's idealized projection of the past. Nor does recognizing and retrieving such textual sublimations necessarily undermine the obvious need to restore the dignity and integrity of these early autobiographers' lives. In fact, this restoration can be enhanced by foregrounding those submerged power relations so often inherent in the social manifestations of these lives.

At a time when I was beginning to transcribe my grandfather's manuscript, a strange occurrence at a cemetery revealed more about my grandfather's relation to his past and his sense of self-identity than I had to that point been prepared to grasp. When Aunt Chavela was laid to rest in July 1992, the myth of my grandfather's father, drawn in part from his photograph, was figuratively exhumed. The funeral was held in Santa Paula,

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a rural community north of Los Angeles and not far from Fillmore, the town where my grandfather and his wife, Concepción, had reared their children. After the service, a priest read a prayer over the open grave, and my family and I passed by Chavela's casket. My father stopped to greet Nicolás Róbles and his family—some Róbleses visiting from Mexico, he later informed me, that he had not seen in some twenty years (my grandfather left immediately after the service, without speaking to any of the Róbleses.) After the funeral ended, we also met a couple who introduced themselves as cousins of my father, though he had never met either of them.

After introducing herself, the woman then launched into a tirade in Spanish against the Pérez family and especially against Juan Lira Pérez, who had been dead for some eighty years. That my father and his siblings, all U.S.-born, neither knew their grandfather nor, with the exception of my Aunt Esther, took any interest in their dead ancestors, made this confrontation all the more baffling. Hearing the commotion, others gathered alongside of us. Face-to-face with my father, our cousin attacked the moral character of the Pérez patriarch, and by association that of the four succeeding male generations, including my own. The spitefulness of the woman's colloquial Spanish cannot be captured in translation. In effect, she called our long-deceased founding patriarch a "philandering criminal" who in pre-revolutionary Zacatecas left a trail of hate and misery wherever he trod. Concluding her tirade with a string of curses, she informed her stunned audience that the Pérez's family's cherished mythical grandfather had at the age of fifty-six raped Dominga Róbles, his wife's younger sister, who for a short period in 1912 had come to live with the couple while my great-grandmother Juliana was recovering from childbirth. The product of that crime, Paulo Róbles Pérez—half-brother and cousin to my grandfather—was later adopted by Dominga's brother José.

The forty-five-year-old woman before us, Berta Róbles, was José's daughter—but she was also a Róbles by *marriage*, having wed Paulo's son José Pérez (her second cousin).[25] Eighty-some years after Lira Pérez's transgression, on the occasion of a gathering of the two branches of my grandfather's family, she now sought retribution. According to her family narrative, though the Róbles family hoped that the illegitimate Paulo

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would be legally recognized by his father, the boy was spurned, and he and his mother barred from claiming any inheritance upon the death of Lira Pérez.[26] Growing up in the family of his mother, the child suffered the stigma of a confused identity as the bastard child of a man detested by those forced to rear the boy. Nor has my grandfather ever acknowledged the kinship. As if keenly aware of the Róbles's dispossession, in "Memorias" my grandfather proclaims his privileged status as "primogenitor," the legitimate firstborn son with inheritance rights to his father's property in Jerez (2).[27] My grandfather had even gone to a funeral in Santa Paula, California, also attended by his half-brother Paulo, but as one of my aunts later recalled, when directed to meet the elderly man, my grandfather answered, "I don't have any brother."

Leaving us to gather ourselves at the edge of Aunt Chavela's grave, Berta and her husband then departed, but the story was not yet finished, for Nicolás, another Róbles "cousin," then pulled my father aside. Though more discreet than Berta, his message was all the more startling for its brevity. "Lo hubieran podido matar," he said, "they could have killed him for what he did . . . they could have killed your grandfather for what he did to that girl" —words all the more chilling because Lira Pérez was of course also Nicolás's grandfather.

Before I propose a theoretical resolution to the questions that arose from this incident, I should first briefly reconstruct those events occurring between 1912 and 1914 which my grandfather and Berta have so differently described. I begin with the obvious: that part of the Róbles family has remained angry with the Pérez family for almost eighty years, as a result of events involving my grandfather's father two years prior to Lira Pérez's departure from the town of his birth. In a manner contradicting my grandfather's usual sentimental bent, the account of this time in "Memorias" stresses Lira Pérez's precarious political position. Though the local sociopolitical circumstances of the forced flight are not intimated, my grandfather indicates that as an associate of the hacienda elite his father was viewed as an enemy of the revolutionaries, and that he left his ancestral home because guerrilla soldiers were planning to execute him.

The legend of his 1914 flight, which had fascinated and disturbed me as a college student, as well as the less than heroic

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reasons for the exodus, I can now see are plainly inscribed in the "margins" of my grandfather's memoirs. My earlier desire to reconstruct an ideologically acceptable version of my past had led me to dismiss these passages as youthful "adventures," largely extraneous to my grandfather's narrative of origins. In his account of 1914, my grandfather describes how Don Lira Pérez hid in a well for three days without food while the soldiers searching for him sacked and burned his property at San Juan de las Calabasas. The haciendas where his father had been employed for more than three decades were also raided and burned. A few days later, the fallen patriarch emerged from his hiding place, escaping with his six-year-old son under the cover of night. What now strikes me in this section of my grandfather's otherwise nostalgic reconstruction of his childhood is his lasting resentment that "when the revolutionaries, those blood brothers of ours, arrived in Jerez, they executed people and they forced many others to flee. . . . They wanted to kill my father, too. Many times he escaped by the skin of his teeth . . . a week later we all escaped through the mountains by burro, one for each of us" (4).[28]

The image of his father escaping in the dark is my grandfather's sharpest memory of this journey through the mountains, and although Lira Pérez lived for another five years, and my grandfather remained in Mexico for two more after his death, this childhood trauma—the originary moment of separation from his ancestral Mexican community—serves in "Memorias" as Padilla's point of sociocultural rupture in the Mexican American autobiographical consciousness. By fixating on the image of his father on that night, my grandfather nostalgically pushes aside the humiliating details of the previous days. Eighty years after his father's inglorious retreat, for my grandfather he remains the tall figure in front of him, restored imaginatively to an honored position within the idealized cultural geography of his settler ancestors. "There, fleeing from his ancestral home," my grandfather writes, "went an honorable and productive citizen . . . who at one time was a descendant of the most prosperous and propertied 'hacendados' in the entire valley of Jerez" (4). Neither his father's exile, nor his own permanent displacement, can be viewed by my grandfather except in the light of the mythic hacienda past. His is the elite class perspective of a child whose secure and comfortable

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world has been overturned by a ragtag group of peons. The peasant soldiers who sought his father, he suggests, were actually using their newfound power for short-term gain. As my grandfather ironically explains, "we left at night so that our loyal Mexican 'brethren,' people who one day were our employees and we the employers, couldn't detect us" (4).

We have come a long way from the family narratives of some Chicanos whose "antepasados" were said to have ridden a "raid or two" with Pancho Villa—but we must go further. As I would later learn from my father's sister and my aunt, Esther, who met and spoke with Berta Róbles, the Róbles family believes that when Juliana, my grandfather's mother, was pregnant in 1912–1913 with her third child, she was cared for in her home by her younger sister Dominga. The Róbles family charges that Lira Pérez raped his sister-in-law, and then renounced his illegitimate son Paulo, primarily for business reasons. According to the Róbles account, astute accountant that he was, he may have realized that legally recognizing the male child would create a web of legal and financial difficulties for his other sons and family in Jerez. Obviously he did not foresee his forced departure from the town two years later.

But this was not the end of the tale that Lira Pérez, while in Jerez, had written for himself. The fierce nostalgia of my grandfather's account of the escape from this town also obscures and suppresses yet another side of his father's life during the 1912–1914 period: a secret relationship with a woman named María Herrera, who would later become his fourth wife, but who at this time lived with her family twenty miles from Jerez at a hacienda called Víboras (Vipers). (After his father's death in 1919, María and her siblings were extremely important to Francisco; her family took care of him, and he eventually married María's youngest sister, Concepción.) As my grand father perhaps unintentionally acknowledged in a tape-recorded interview in 1987, when his father left Jerez in 1914 on short notice, he took along with Francisco his "mistress/wife" María and their two children—a boy named Lucas, born in 1912, and a baby girl named Diega, born a few months before the family's flight. " Although "Memorias" does not mention María as part of Lira Pérez's life in Jerez, in this interview María appears in my grandfather's description of the next leg of their arduous 1914 journey. After they left the mountains, they

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boarded a train, but were forced to ride on its roof because it was filled with federal soldiers apparently on their way north to do battle with Pancho Villa's army. My grandfather remembered María sitting on the curved roof at night, holding on to Diega, struggling to keep herself and the baby from falling off the shaking train. Clearly contradicting this taped recollection, "Memorias" instead states vaguely that it was "during his father's stay" in Torreón, where he lived on and off between 1914 and his death, that both Lucas and Diega were born. By suggesting that Lira Pérez met María after leaving Jerez, the text erases the secret affair with María. Since this third relationship means that between 1912 and 1914 Lira Pérez had four children by three women—Paulo by Dominga Róbles; Lucas and Diega by María Herrera; and Marcos II, who died in infancy in 1913, by his wife Juliana—Berta's impassioned complaint at the funeral becomes all the more credible and compelling. And yet, although María could presumably have been blamed for Dominga's abandonment by Lira Pérez, the Róbles family narrative doesn't mention her at all, suggesting that the Róbles accusation centers upon Lira Pérez's apparent abuse of Dominga, rather than his decision, if this is in fact what occurred, to take María, rather than Dominga, with him.

The Róbles narrative instead draws other conclusions from the events of this time. Both Dominga and Juliana died at a young age, Juliana in 1913 and Dominga, who was at least ten years younger than her sister, in 1922. Esther, who for a time mistakenly believed that Dominga had died in 1916, once joked that the aging patriarch may have "poisoned" these young sisters to extricate himself from the legal and personal morass he had created, and while this theory is chronologically impossible, I obviously have no way of determining the complete truth of Lira Pérez's complex relationship with the Róbleses. For the present purpose, the story is what matters. But my aunt's passing remarks do perhaps throw added light on the origins of the Róbles narrative, for as Berta's and Nicolás's comments insinuate, the Róbles family may have excoriated Lira Pérez not only for his rape of Dominga and repudiation of Paulo, but also for the deaths of both sisters at an early age. Juliana apparently died of natural causes while recovering from childbirth, but after losing their second daughter Dominga at a young age in 1922, the Róbles family may have concluded that

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any of their daughters who came in contact with Lira Pérez would meet a tragic end.

By preventing further contact between the Pérez and Róbles families, the revolution settled the issue of the illegitimate child—or so it seemed. For my purposes the entry of the revolutionaries into Jerez in 1914 serves two important functions. First, by destroying Lira Pérez's career, dispossessing him of his property, and forcing him into permanent exile, it gave him his deserved comeuppance for his decades-long role in the hacienda caste system. This financial ruin and exile explain my grandfather's socioeconomic and cultural "orphanhood." Had his father not left Jerez nor lost his property, my grandfather probably would not have needed to emigrate to the United States. But second, the civil war ensured that the mystery of Lira Pérez's relationship to the Róbles family would never be fully revealed for many decades. The Róbleses never had the opportunity to confront the despised founding father of one line of their family, nor—because most of them remained in Mexico until the 1950s—his immediate heirs.

I have only recently learned from my Aunt Esther what is perhaps the most tragic irony in my family narrative. My grandfather apparently always blamed his mother's death in 1913 *on her sister Dominga!* Refusing to imagine his father in anything but a luminous aura, he came to view this younger sister as a wily temptress and seducer of a distinguished and reluctant patriarch. According to this improbable twist, my grandfather's bedridden mother died of a "broken heart" brought on by the shock of her own sister's betrayal. In this way my grandfather transferred the blame for Lira Pérez's apparent crimes onto the Róbles family, thus allowing my grandfather to embrace a long-dead father and mother by salvaging untarnished memories of them from the chaos of family history—his most ambitious narrative sleight of hand.

IV

> In the dining hall of the workers' camp at Rancho Sespe, I heard a [Mexican] "bracero," a plebeian, make the following comment while he ate: "One must eat the gringo's food, but should throw the plate in his face." I leave this statement to your critical judgment. In difficult times, all things are acceptable. . . .

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> All of this is a part of a past that is filled with memories and not a few sufferings, but today I am proud for having surmounted them. . . . I was a child in Mexico, then a youth in the United States, a man, a mature man, and now I am an old man. . . . I am so old I already have one foot in the "other world." And what more than this is the inheritance of mankind? Today I am content that the maker of the infinite universe has granted me and my family the divine grace of living for so many years.
>
> —Francisco R. Pérez, "Memorias"

> Memory—how we remember and what we choose to remember, since we cannot remember everything—is intimately tied to a culturally organized discursive habitat.
>
> —Genaro M. Padilla, *My History, Not Yours*

The Róbles family narrative illuminates, from the perspective of the "invisible" victims of the hacienda caste system, the class-based social contradictions as well as the gender-defined conflicts in hacienda society which formed the roots of the civil war and revolution, but which my grandfather's nostalgic idealization of his father's life effectively suppresses. My grandfather alludes to his father's local political predicament and forced exile, but his single reference to the events leading up to the 1914 "well" episode is tellingly brief—a brevity that elides the painfully sublimated reality of the family's exodus. In my grandfather's account, Pancho Villa's peasant followers wished to put Lira Pérez to death because he was a "patrón" (boss). The further information which Berta Róbles provides in her definitive deconstruction of the Pérez patriarchal legend—a dismantling completed by my family's own knowledge of Lira Pérez's affair with María Herrera—suggests that my grandfather's father apparently abused his privileged status in Jerez not only to violate the young Róbles daughter sexually, but also to evade responsibility for his actions. In the male-dominated, economically polarized hacienda world, Lira Pérez's elite peers may well have viewed his actions as an "indiscretion." But when Villa's army swept into town in 1914, this "indiscretion" was likely only one of the many moral transgressions held against the Jerez "hacendados" and their associates. I have learned from interviews with other family members that in 1912 Dominga must have been more than thirty

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years Lira Pérez's junior, and while my relatives today refuse to broach the topic, I am convinced that Lira Pérez raped Dominga, for only that would seem to account fully for Berta's outburst and Nicolás's comment at the funeral, as well as the other corroborating stories that I have subsequently gathered.[29]

The silencing of Dominga's voice in my family history emblematizes that elaborate suppression of submerged power relations and social antagonisms found in many of the early Mexican American autobiographies. In such texts nostalgia for an idealized past is often the narrator's dominant self-fashioning technique. Though a highly subjective narrative constructed by deeply interested individuals over three generations, Berta's anti-nostalgic denunciation of the Pérez patriarch lays bare fundamental class and gender conflicts buried deep within the imaginary pastoral sociocultural terrain of "Memorias." Lira Pérez's elite class status before the civil war, a position bolstered by the capitalist modernization of the Mexican hacienda economy under Porfirio Díaz, probably would have protected him from any accusation by the Róbles family, apparently people of a lower, though not necessarily peasant, class whose own economic situation appears to have worsened considerably during the war. Working for "hacendados" for more than thirty years would have in all likelihood ensured for my grandfather's father the protection of those men who for decades had wielded political and economic authority in the region. Even a university educated crony of the "hacendados," however, could not have foreseen in 1912 the coming social upheaval, nor the arrival in Jerez two years later of organized peasant revolutionaries.

Padilla's study of early Mexican American autobiographies has informed my attempts to describe the range of contradictory socio-ideological and cultural meanings inscribed in my grandfather's autobiography. Padilla adroitly positions Mexican American autobiographies in relation to their authors' sociohistorical and cultural condition under Anglo American hegemony. He also demonstrates the complex by which they forge an identity for themselves out of their marginalized lives. Valuable not only as foundational Mexican American literary texts, the heroic, self-told stories of formerly unknown Mexican American writers also disclose the monumental injustice Mexican American society has suffered through the exclusion

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of Chicano works from mainstream American literary and cultural discourse. Beginning as early as 1848, the sustained institutional suppression of such works within the context of Anglo American sociocultural hegemony suggests how great a challenge critics and theorists of Mexican American literature face as they conduct their recuperative and interpretive projects. *My History, Not Yours* is the culmination of a substantial body of research and criticism on Mexican American autobiography. To those who would dismiss the writings of these early autobiographers for their presumed "hacienda syndrome," Padilla replies with a distinctly historicized sense of the complex imbrication of these autobiographers' private and public struggles as Mexican American "orphans" in a land which was once their cultural, spiritual, and geographic home. Rosaura Sánchez's recent scholarship on nineteenth-century Mexican American writing follows in the path created by Padilla's retrieval project and particularly the historicist impetus which informs it. Yet Sánchez's work expands on Padilla's theoretical paradigm as well as on his treatment of the socio-ideological and political context of the Californio narratives. As Sánchez puts it, her study is "rooted in cultural politics," and thus considers "cultural production as inseparable from structural and agential relations." For that reason it "takes on and examines the issue of representation by a subaltern population within the context of relations of production, social restructuring, and collective agency" (x). Because Sánchez offers a more comprehensive study of that large body of testimonials by Californios collected by Bancroft in the 1870s, and takes Padilla's historicist premises a crucial step forward through its dialectical analysis grounded in feminist, postcolonial, and especially Marxist theory, her work will prove indispensable to the future study of nineteenth-century Mexican American literature.[30]

Sánchez's aim in *Telling Identities* may be said to parallel my own. As Berta Róbles's narrative powerfully suggests, such historicizing as Padilla's may still leave the voice of other victims and orphans of history suppressed. They must no longer be silenced. Although the story of Dominga Róbles has been elaborately sublimated within my own family consciousness for more than eighty years, her distant voice, if not yet fully retrieved, has finally been acknowledged. Berta's dramatic statement at the funeral, as well as the other family secrets

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presented in this essay, should thus remind scholars intent on recovering marginalized texts and establishing the discursive genealogy of suppressed (Chicano) literary traditions that the powerfully disruptive autobiographical impulse to self-invention is always at work. Her confrontation with my grandfather's text, and her implicit challenge of Padilla's autobiography model has a more fundamental purpose as well. Just as her narrative has profoundly influenced my own interpretation of my grandfather's text, as students of Mexican American autobiography we must recognize and identify the omissions, inaccuracies, misrepresentations, and lies—both conscious and unconscious—in other foundational Mexican American narratives, if we wish to move toward a version of history closer to the "truth" than we can ever approach through "close" readings of Mexican American autobiographies. As I've suggested, Sánchez's project on the California testimonies has already begun to move Chicano/a autobiography studies in this productive direction. Engaging the socio-ideological suppressions of nineteenth-century autobiographers, and particularly their pre-U.S. nostalgic sublimations, will help scholars both recuperate and critique how their subjects represent the existential and identitarian dilemmas of their culturally fragmented existence. Though Berta's disclosure does not necessarily provide a more representative version of the Mexican American past, it certainly reveals the remarkable energy of my grandfather's retrospective desire, after a life in exile as a cultural "orphan" torn between Mexico and the U.S., to resist his community's "present" sociocultural erasure and fragmentation by imaginatively restoring yet at the same time tenaciously repressing the social reality of his Mexican ancestors.

Speaking of Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo, Padilla notes that his autobiography operates as a eulogy to a Mexican "social and cultural subjectivity stranded in the past over and against a colonized subjectivity accommodating and acquiescent toward an American social formation that had exploited and displaced [Mexicans]" (*My History* 87). Like many modern Mexican immigrant narrators, Vallejo and other nineteenth-century Mexican American authors write from the cultural perspective of a marginalized community dislocated, exploited, and excluded by colonizing American institutions. Just as my

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grandfather's orphanhood symbolizes his immigrant community's sociocultural break with the past *and* a continued alienation from both Mexico and the U.S., Vallejo and other early autobiographers write as culturally and economically deracinated "huérfanos" (orphans), compelled to reconstruct in narrative an earlier "heroic" world which American society has denigrated, destroyed, or simply forgotten. Undeniably, like Vallejo and other early autobiographers, my grandfather has struggled in his writings to negotiate his "bi-cultural" status in the U.S. without rejecting Anglo American culture in toto. My grandfather honored this country; and he was in turn very proud of being an American citizen. As a Mexican exploited and dispossessed by American "democratic" social formations, however, he has at the same time resisted in his writings this political and sociocultural hegemony. Along with the family of Dominga Róbles, a true orphan of history, we can only wish that my grandfather had also been capable of speaking to similar repressions in the hacienda sociocultural economy of his Mexican forebears.

Epilogue

> On the second day, a sail drew near, nearer, and picked me up at last. It was the devious-cruising Rachel, that in her retracing search after her missing children, only found another orphan.
>
> —Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*

Since October 17, 1994, the day my grandfather left on a trip to Mexico, my family has received no word from him, nor any other information that would tell us what may have happened to him and, most importantly, whether he is still alive. A missing person's report was filed with U.S. and Mexican police, and the disappearance was publicized in several newspapers in Los Angeles and along the U.S.-Mexican border. In later 1994 the Ventura County Police Department informed us that my grandfather did arrive on the seventeenth at the Los Angeles bus depot downtown, where he purchased a ticket to the Mexican border city of Tijuana. The police, however, could not determine whether he boarded the bus which would have taken him to Mexico. Just as the California and Mexican authorities have been confounded by this case, my family has also been frustrated in in its own efforts to find out what may have become

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of my grandfather. Our relatives in central and northern Mexico have heard nothing from him; hospitals, funeral homes, and public institutions that we have contacted in Mexico and the U.S. have no record of his admittance; media announcements of his disappearance ultimately yielded no rewarding clues. After almost two years of exasperation and grief, we have grown resigned to the likelihood that, barring new information, the circumstances of his death will remain a mystery. On the second anniversary of his departure later this year, we will hold a memorial service to honor my grandfather.

When he boarded a bus in Fillmore, California, at a location just down the road from where, as an impoverished young farmworker seeking employment at the Sespe Ranch, he had arrived sixty years earlier, my grandfather was not carrying any luggage and, as he was wont to do in his old age, probably had no identification. He was eighty-six years old, underweight, and in poor health. His adopted community of more than half a century must have seemed strangely different to my grandfather from the town that he had first seen in his youth. After his wife died, he lived alone in a tract house that he never considered his true home because it was "far away" (five miles) from the traditional Mexican community at Sespe Village where he had reared his children and where, against their wishes, he continued to live until 1970. Beginning in the late forties, the children had all left the village for Los Angeles; his grandchildren and great-grandchildren, all of them assimilated and urban, were now further removed from their patriarch's Mexican rural community and culture.

Some would probably never know what the workers' camp at Sespe meant to my grandfather. The Mexican village, built above the banks of a river and set amid citrus and avocado orchards as well as tall eucalyptus and oak trees, had once been a thriving and self-sustaining community filled with well-tended homes and productive gardens—a place where for decades the language, customs, and culture of Mexico were practiced and maintained in the midst of an Anglo-dominated environment that was both hostile and exploitative toward Mexicans. My grandfather was proud of the town and of the people who had been a part of it. When he first arrived there, he knew that the village, from its houses to its trees and flowers, was owned by the Spalding family, and that Mexican workers and their families could be evicted on short notice at the whim of its owners.[31] Yet its rural and pastoral qualities must have

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attracted my grandfather from the outset, perhaps reminding him of his secure and idyllic hacienda childhood alongside his father and grandmother Hipólita at San Juan de las Calabasas. My Aunt Esther's version of her childhood at Sespe supports this very characterization. She describes it nostalgically as a "little paradise that was surrounded on three sides by lemon and orange orchards and completely isolated from the American community five miles away . . . a place where the skies were clear, the air fresh, the nearby mountains high and majestic, and the river that bordered the village a haven for a man and his three growing sons."

Until it was demolished five years ago, Sespe Village remained a functioning workers' camp for Mexican agricultural laborers and their families. One year before the camp was razed, my parents, grandparents, and I visited the town for the last time. Access to the village was the same as it had been fifty years earlier, a bumpy dirt road whose entrance was barely visible from the highway and which wound for a half mile through a thick grove of orange and avocado trees and then along the Sespe River to the dusty outskirts of the town. Amid the 150 shotgun houses in disrepair and decay, we found the house where my father and his brothers and sisters spent their childhoods. My grandparents and my father were upset and disappointed at the condition of the dilapidated house, and especially the growth of weeds and vegetation engulfing it and the other homes. My father recalled this home, and the Mexican village of his youth, in a manner reminiscent of his father's own nostalgic recollection of the bountiful hacienda landscape where Juan Lira Pérez had lived.

Though most of its full-time residents had already deserted Sespe Village, as we drove through the town, we met an old man, Pancho Casas, Nico's brother-in-law and a close friend of my grandfather, whose family had lived in the camp since the time of my grandfather's arrival in 1935. Knowing that the last inhabitants of the town were young immigrants from Mexico, I was astonished at meeting, at that late date, a distant relative and an original resident from my grandfather's generation. I half-expected other ghosts from my grandfather's past to appear—perhaps, as I now reflect on that visit, his lost half-brother Paulo, whose distant cousins (Nico and his siblings) had lived in Sespe Village from the twenties through the sixties. But, as it turned out, Señor Casas was at that moment preparing to move.

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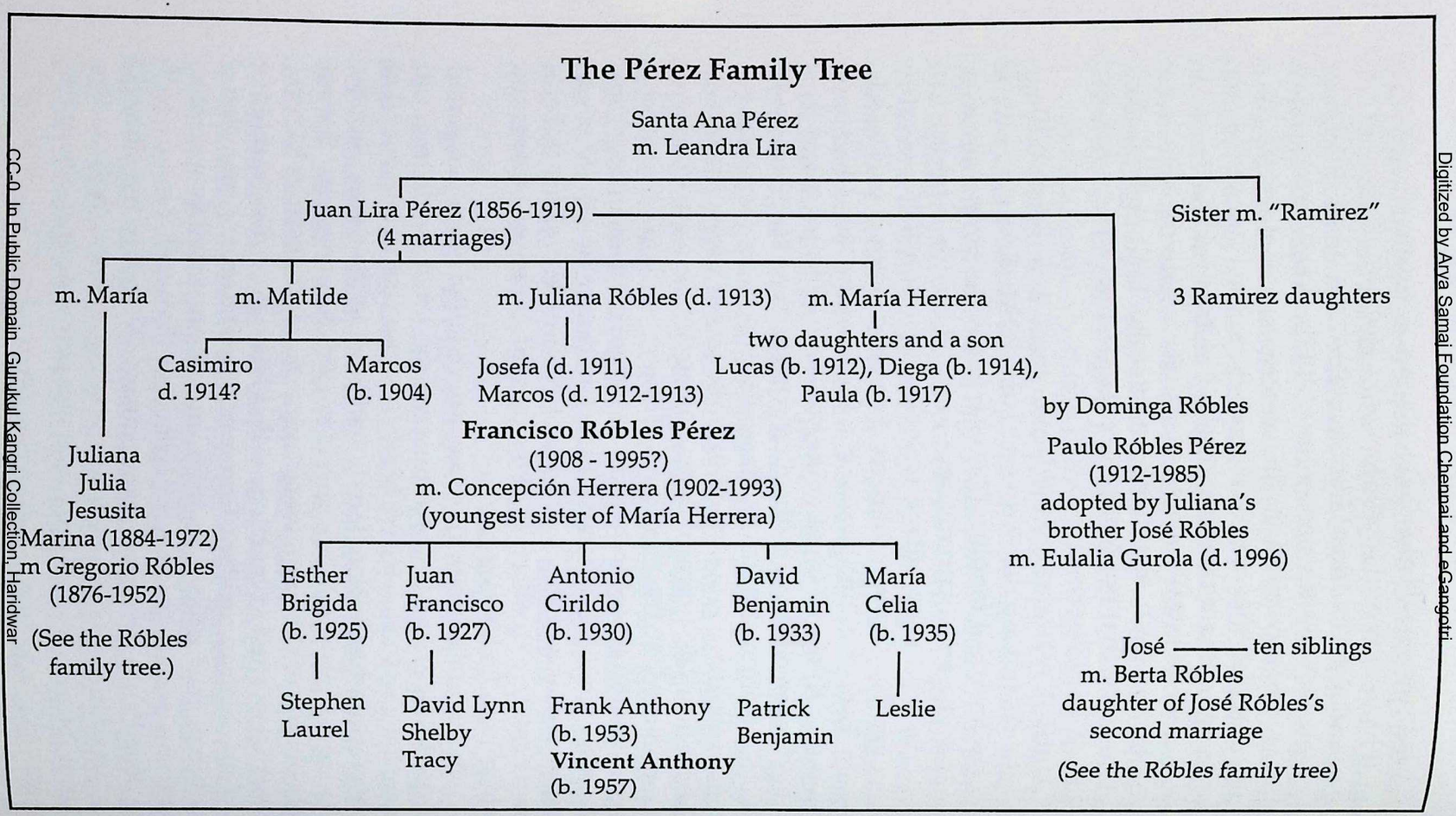
The Pérez Family Tree

Santa Ana Pérez
m. Leandra Lira

- Juan Lira Pérez (1856-1919) (4 marriages)
  - m. María
    - Juliana
    - Julia
    - Jesusita
    - Marina (1884-1972)
    - m Gregorio Róbles (1876-1952)
    - (See the Róbles family tree.)
  - m. Matilde
    - Casimiro d. 1914?
    - Marcos (b. 1904)
  - m. Juliana Róbles (d. 1913)
    - Josefa (d. 1911)
    - Marcos (d. 1912-1913)
  - m. María Herrera
    - two daughters and a son
    - Lucas (b. 1912), Diega (b. 1914), Paula (b. 1917)
  - by Dominga Róbles
    - Paulo Róbles Pérez (1912-1985) adopted by Juliana's brother José Róbles m. Eulalia Gurola (d. 1996)
      - José — ten siblings
        - m. Berta Róbles daughter of José Róbles's second marriage
        - *(See the Róbles family tree)*
- Sister m. "Ramirez"
  - 3 Ramirez daughters

Francisco Róbles Pérez
(1908 - 1995?)
m. Concepción Herrera (1902-1993)
(youngest sister of María Herrera)

- Esther Brigida (b. 1925)
  - Stephen Laurel
- Juan Francisco (b. 1927)
  - David Lynn
  - Shelby
  - Tracy
- Antonio Cirildo (b. 1930)
  - Frank Anthony (b. 1953)
  - **Vincent Anthony** (b. 1957)
- David Benjamin (b. 1933)
  - Patrick Benjamin
- María Celia (b. 1935)
  - Leslie



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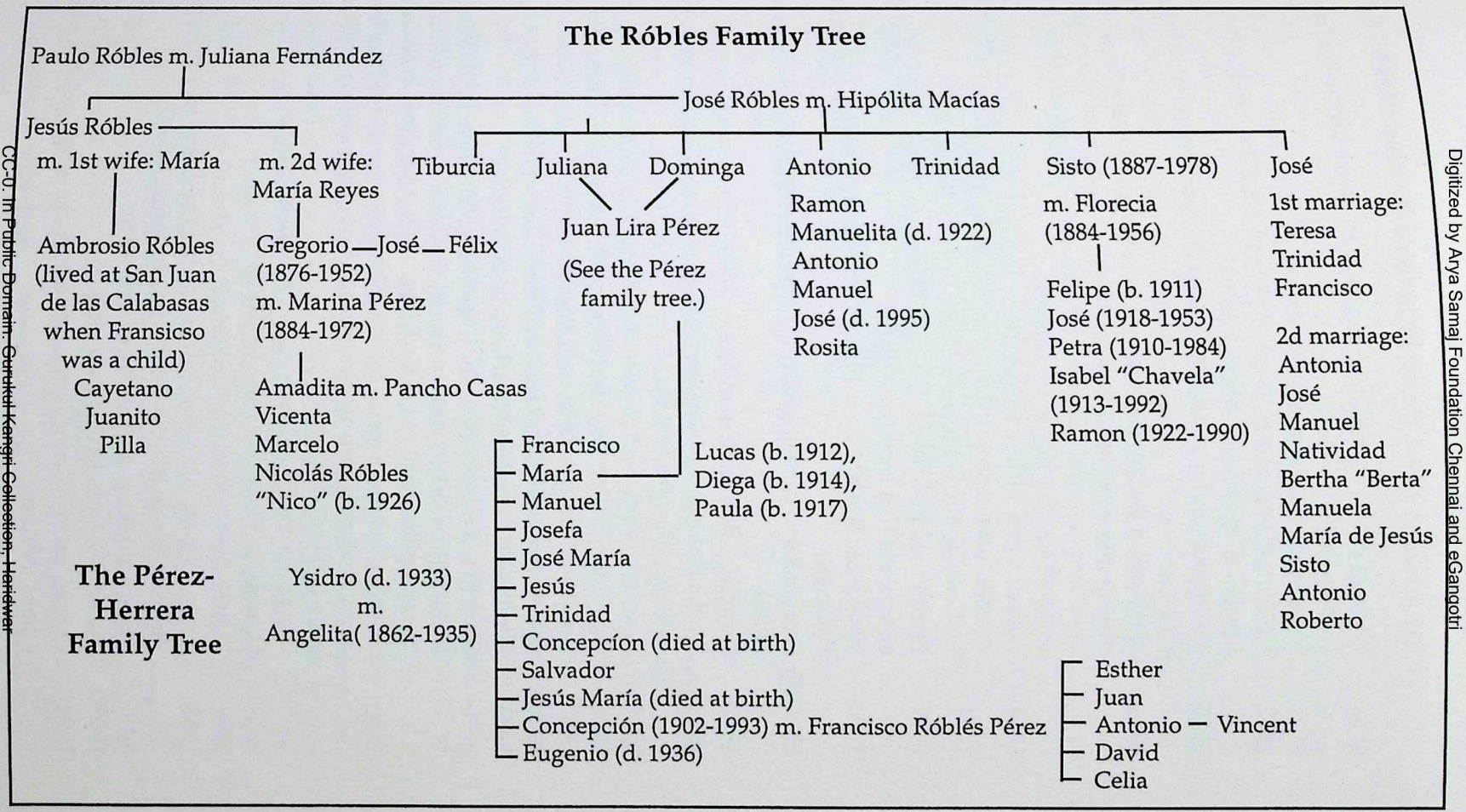
The Róbles Family Tree

Paulo Róbles m. Juliana Fernández

- Jesús Róbles
  - m. 1st wife: María
    - Ambrosio Róbles (lived at San Juan de las Calabasas when Fransicso was a child)
    - Cayetano
    - Juanito
    - Pilla
  - m. 2d wife: María Reyes
    - Gregorio — José — Félix (1876-1952) m. Marina Pérez (1884-1972)
      - Amadita m. Pancho Casas
      - Vicenta
      - Marcelo
      - Nicolás Róbles "Nico" (b. 1926)
    - Ysidro (d. 1933) m. Angelita(1862-1935)
- José Róbles m. Hipólita Macías
  - Tiburcia
  - Juliana
  - Dominga
    - Juan Lira Pérez (See the Pérez family tree.)
      - Francisco
      - María
        - Lucas (b. 1912), Diega (b. 1914), Paula (b. 1917)
      - Manuel
      - Josefa
      - José María
      - Jesús
      - Trinidad
      - Concepcíon (died at birth)
      - Salvador
      - Jesús María (died at birth)
      - Concepción (1902-1993) m. Francisco Róblés Pérez
      - Eugenio (d. 1936)
  - Antonio
    - Ramon
    - Manuelita (d. 1922)
    - Antonio
    - Manuel
    - José (d. 1995)
    - Rosita
  - Trinidad
  - Sisto (1887-1978) m. Florecia (1884-1956)
    - Felipe (b. 1911)
    - José (1918-1953)
    - Petra (1910-1984)
    - Isabel "Chavela" (1913-1992)
    - Ramon (1922-1990)
  - José
    - 1st marriage:
      - Teresa
      - Trinidad
      - Francisco
    - 2d marriage:
      - Antonia
      - José
      - Manuel
      - Natividad
      - Bertha "Berta"
      - Manuela
      - María de Jesús
      - Sisto
      - Antonio
      - Roberto

The Pérez-Herrera Family Tree

- Esther
- Juan
- Antonio — Vincent
- David
- Celia



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Chronology: The Life of Francisco Róbles Pérez

1908	Born in Jerez, Zacatecas, Mexico, to Juan Lira Pérez and Juliana Róbles Pérez.
1911	35 year reign of Porfirio Díaz ends.
1912	Half-brother/cousin Paulo Róbles Pérez and half-brother Lucas Herrera Pérez born in Jerez.
1913	Childhood in Jerez and San Juan de las Calabasas. Mother dies.
1914	Half-sister Diega Herrera Pérez born in Jerez. Civil war breaks out. Revolutionaries arrive in Jerez. Flees with father and "step-mother" María Herrera. In Coahuila, father and son witness the Battle of Torreón.
1914–17	Moves with father throughout central Mexico. Francisco attends school sporadically to the third grade.
1917	Half-sister Paula Herrera Pérez born in Torreón.
1919	Father dies in Gómez Palacios, Durango. Francisco takes job as servant to a wealthy family.
1920	Works as servant to a North American dentist in Gómez Palacios.
1921–23	Emigrates to the U.S. with the Herrera family, in-laws to his father.
1922	Dominga Róbles dies in Jerez.
1921	Works as a farm laborer in Orange County, California. Lives with the Herrera family.
1924	Marries Concepción Herrera in Whittier, California.
1925	Daughter Esther Brígida Herrera Pérez born in Placentia.
1927	Son Juan Francisco Herrera Pérez born in Placentia.
1930	Son Antonio Cirildo Herrera Pérez born in Placentia.
1933	Son David Herrera Pérez born in Placentia.
1935	Blacklisted by ranchers for organizing Mexican agricultural workers; forced to leave Orange County, California. Moves family to Ventura County. Takes a job as a farm laborer at Rancho Sespe, owned by the Spalding sports equipment manufacturing family. Daughter Maria Celia Herrera Pérez born in Sespe Village.
1935–77	Works for the Spalding family at Rancho Sespe.
1957	Grandson Vincent Anthony Pérez born.
1977	Retires from job at Rancho Sespe.
1985	Begins taped narration of his autobiography to grandson Vincent. Paulo Róbles Pérez dies in Jerez, Mexico.
1990	Begins work on written autobiography.
1992	Funeral of Isabel "Chavela" Róbles.
1994	Leaves on trip to Mexico. Reported missing and believed dead by family.

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NOTES

AUTHOR'S NOTE: I would like to acknowledge the help and support of my aunt, Esther Pérez Doran, in the writing of this essay. The daughter and eldest child of Francisco Róbles Pérez, and the first Pérez of her generation to attend college, Esther is today a marriage, family, and child counselor, a clinical specialist in psychiatric nursing, and is employed at the Los Angeles Veterans Administration Medical Center's Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Unit. Without her love, inspiration, knowledge, and guidance, the truths that I have tried to bring to light in this article could not have been recovered.

1. "Mexican Song"

   My grandfather, when he took his coffee
   Told me about Juárez and Porfirio
   The Zouaves and the "silver soldiers"
   And the tablecloth smelled of gunpowder.
   My father, when he took a drink
   Told me about Zapata and Villa
   Soto y Gama and the Flores Magón brothers
   And the tablecloth smelled of gunpowder.

   I am silent
   Of whom could I speak?

2. Two recent studies of autobiography, both of which draw upon previous research on the nineteenth-century origins of Chicano literature, are Genaro M. Padilla's *My History, Not Yours*, and Rosaura Sánchez's *Telling Identities: The* Californio testimonios. Padilla's model provides the discursive framework for my analysis of Mexican American immigrant autobiography. For two recent articles which engage issues linked to Padilla's discussion, see Rebolledo and Goldman. The first studies to deal specifically with Chicano autobiography as a genre are Marquez; Padilla, "Self as Cultural Metaphor"; and Saldívar, "Ideologies."

3. See Saldívar, *Chicano Narrative*, particularly chapter seven; and Bruce-Novoa, *Retrospace*, of which chapters six and fourteen address the theme of a Mexican homeland in Chicano literature. Following Bruce-Novoa's conceptualization of Chicano literary theory, and recent pathbreaking works by Ramón Saldívar and José David Saldívar, my examination of Mexican American autobiography takes as its underlying critical assumptions the need for "dialectical analysis that takes history into consideration as another text," and the idea "that true dialectical thought is always self-critical" (Bruce-Novoa, *Retrospace* 171).

4. The "Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage" project, under the direction of Nicolás Kanellos at the University of

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Houston, has been at the forefront of this recuperative endeavor. An earlier version of this article was presented in December 1994 at the Recovery Project Conference. See Gutiérrez and Padilla for an anthology of critical essays collected and published through this project.

5. Francisco Róbles Pérez's "Memorias" is an unpublished manuscript. All subsequent paginations refer to the seventy page text that I have compiled from my transcription of two notebooks from the original text.
6. Though called "aunt" by my father, Isabel "Chavela" Róbles was actually my grandfather's first cousin, the niece of Juliana Róbles and first cousin of Berta Róbles (see the family tree).
7. Raymund A. Paredes uses this term to highlight sociocultural and ideological contradictions in writings by early New Mexican "Hispano" writers, and to call attention to what he views as the works' "contrived and derivative romanticism" (52–53).
8. For Chicana feminist approaches to Chicano/Mexicano culture and history which intersect my analysis of the Róbles critique of Mexicano patriarchy, see the distinguished body of writings produced over the past ten years by, for example, Rosaura Sánchez, Norma Alarcón, Gloria Anzaldúa, Ana Castillo, Cherrie Moraga, María Herrera-Sobek, and Tey Diana Rebolledo. Because of the Chicana's position within a patriarchal society, many Chicana writers are keenly attuned to the historical and ideological issues which I raise throughout this article. Yet, at the same time several Chicana cultural critics have posited a unitary Mexican homeland and therefore apparently created ideologically self-contradictory texts. As Padilla has explained, "Anzaldúa and other recent Chicano autobiographers, although recognizing themselves as occupying a social space of multiple identities, speak another (contradictory?) desire for a unitary and collective cultural economy imagined in the past, or on the other side of the border" (238).
9. Sociologist Mario Barrera notes the diverse socioeconomic origins of early twentieth century Mexican emigrants to the U.S.: "the background of the immigrants prior to migrating is a little-explored topic. The impression most writers have is that the immigrants during this period were largely agricultural workers in Mexico, notwithstanding the fact that the Mexican Revolution of 1910–1920 also caused people of higher occupational categories to migrate. Still, there are indications that the immigrants were not necessarily representative of the largely rural, agricultural population in Mexico at that time" (67). Barrera cites a 1944 survey in San Bernardino, California, of men who had come to the U.S.

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from Mexico in the early part of the century, which indicated that only about a third of them had been engaged in hacienda work in Mexico.

10. Doroteo Arango (Francisco "Pancho" Villa) (1877–1922) led a guerrilla army in northern Mexico which during the 1912–1917 period fought to overthrow the Mexican government. In March-April 1914, in the town of Torreón, Coahuila, my grandfather and his father crossed paths with Villa's army, as they were caught in one of the major battles of Villa's career and the bloodiest of the Mexican revolution. "Memorias" describes the two-week-long artillery and infantry siege by the revolutionary army from the perspective of a child barricaded in a house with his family. After days of explosions which included, according to my grandfather, the destruction of a nearby train filled with ammunition, and several days more of street fighting, my grandfather and his family emerged from their house to search for food and water. "In the street there were mountains of dead bodies," my grandfather writes, "both soldiers and their horses, thousands of dead piled on each other in the streets, all shot and covered with blood . . . the plumes of smoke and soot made the sky look yellow, because all of the fincas (ranches) near the town had been burned and all of the businesses and stores in town had been sacked and burned in just a few days" (17). Seven thousand soldiers were killed in the battle and thousands more were wounded. As my grandfather walked through a street near his house after the battle, he discovered a revolver on the ground. He recalls dragging the gun home to give to his father. Grandfather's most vivid memory of this event is of his father, after seeing the gift, angrily throwing it outside. He admonished his son harshly for drawing attention to their family during a dangerous time.
11. See Ricardo Sánchez's interview with Tomás Rivera in Bruce-Novoa, *Chicano Authors* (152–3).
12. I will refer to "Memorias" throughout as an autobiography rather than as a *testimonio* (testimonial). The collaborative nature of my genealogical project implies, however, that my grandfather's account may also be classified as a testimonial. Rosaura Sánchez has distinguished testimonials from autobiographies by identifying their collaborative and mediated qualities. According to Sánchez, while autobiography "offers a self-generated/agential discursive construction of 'self' within particular social spaces," the testimonial is the product of a collaboration involving an interviewer/editor. The production of the testimonial is "mediated and filtered through a second, more powerful agency: so that its narrating voice "is othered in terms of production as

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well as at the discursive level." In works of this type, "narrating agency . . . is thus not simply that of the speaking subject but also that of the editing and writing subject" (8). Both the "production" and recuperation of "Memorias" are obviously mediated by my own involvement as an interviewer, editor, and critic. The manuscript will, for instance, include a number of transcribed oral responses to questions posed to my granfather during tape-recorded interviews.

13. The scale of this social upheaval and its impact on the southwest U.S. are suggested by Meier and Ribera in their history of Mexican Americans: "The 1910 revolution, a period of incredible violence and confusion, directly affected the Southwest. Out of fifteen million Mexicans an estimated one million lost their lives in the decade of revolution, and there was a large-scale displacement of people. Thousands fled from the countryside into the larger towns and cities of Mexico; at the same time other thousands fled northward to the United States. No one knows precisely how many Mexicans were involved in this great exodus; one estimate holds that more than one million Mexicans crossed over into the Southwest between 1910 and 1920" (108–9).

As for my grandfather, "Memorias" suggests that he was abandoned. Any blood relatives of his father had apparently remained in Jerez during the revolution, and the war prevented communication with them. My grandfather mentions a sister (mother of the three Ramirez daughters), but she is spoken of only in passing. Except for several half-siblings, no other living Pérez blood relatives are identified in the text. Another family, the Herreras, in-laws to his father and also from Jerez, were extremely important to my grandfather after Lira Pérez died in 1919—in fact, Francisco came to the U.S. with the Herreras. However, he did not consider them "family"; he always felt like an outsider and "orphan" among them. Lira Pérez apparently married the last of his four wives, María Herrera, by whom he had three children, after he settled in Torreón in 1914, but he had his first child, Lucas, by her in 1912, while he was married to Juliana Róbles. (It's also possible that both my family and the Róbleses are a year off on the date of Juliana's death; if she died in 1912 rather than 1913, Lira Pérez could perhaps have married María just after his wife died and then had Lucas later that year.) Apparently, the reason my grandfather felt "abandoned" by his Herrera in-laws was because two years after his father's death, his step-mother María, rather than embrace as a family member her husband's thirteen-year-old son Francisco (who in any case had been supporting himself as a servant for two years), instead handed him a train ticket to the U.S. and "gave" him to her

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brothers who were then preparing to emigrate. She and her own children never emigrated. (My Aunt Esther believes that María sent Francisco to the U.S. so that only she and her children would be able to claim Lira Pérez's property in Jerez). So although my grandfather was by definition an orphan when he journeyed to the U.S., he came here with members of the Herrera family and therefore was not alone and abandoned. Though not mentioned by name in "Memorias," one of the Herreras must have been the person who bought him a pair of shoes at the border (in Mexico he wore only huaraches/sandals). Francisco eventually lived with the Herreras in California for several years, and in 1924 married María's youngest sister, Concepción. "Memorias" states that when my grandfather arrived in 1921 at the Herrera home in Yorba Linda, he had to explain to them who he was. In the middle of a celebration, someone quieted the party, and pointing at Francisco, asked, "And who is he?"

14. For a description of Sespe Village, see the Epilogue.

15. Jerez de la Frontera, the Andalusian town now famous for its sherry wine, was the birthplace of Álvar Núñez de Vaca (1490–1560), the first Spaniard to explore a large region of North America. Fernández and Favata note that Cabeza de Vaca's account of his journey, *La Relación* (1542) is one of the first Spanish descriptions of the New World which "calls for a compassionate and tolerant policy toward the natives of the Western Hemisphere" (11).

16. The brutal suppression of indigenous peoples in Mexico during the colonial period took on a distinctly modern (i.e., positivist) cast during the era in which Lira Pérez prospered as a business associate of the Zacatecan "hacendados." As Meier and Ribera note, between 1880 and 1910 the "economic policies of the government were promoted by a group of positivists, who planned and worked for a modern, scientifically run Mexico which [they believed] would take its rightful place in the world. They accepted that certain races were less advanced because of heredity and environment; they believed that Indians and their culture were inferior and therefore not a sound base on which to build a modern Mexico. In the name of progress they set out to Europeanize Mexico's Indians, partly as a result of positivist ideas . . . Indians were brutally hounded, and many were sold into virtual slavery to large landowners" (104).

17. My grandfather foregrounds his alienation from Anglo American as well as Mexican society, and therefore contradicts recent theoretical projections of a transcultural immigrant subject who traverses cultural borders. Several passages in "Memorias," however, suggest that my grandfather recognized in Mexican

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American cultural formations a new bicultural subject who occupied a borderlands space. In what may well be one of the earliest written references to a distinctive "Chicano" language and culture, my grandfather recalls one of his first encounters, as a Mexican immigrant, with "pochis" (acculturated, "faded" Mexicans). On Sundays in 1922, the Mexican American community where he lived in Whittier, California, would gather for social events. As my grandfather explains, "It was there that I made a few friends, two of whom were young 'pochas' born in the U.S., Rosa and Luisa. One day while we were talking, one of them asked me, 'Oye, por qué no nos tritéas?' (Hey, why don't ya treat us.) To which I answered, 'Y eso, qué es?' (What do you mean?) The other said, 'Pues, que nos des una raspada o una goma.' (Well, buy us a snow cone or some gum.) What they meant to say, of course, was 'una copa de hielo raspado' (a cup of shaved ice) and 'un paquete de chicle' (a packet of chicle). The two spoke very poor Spanish. The 'pochos' also called automobiles 'carruchas.' The following week, I went out on my first date with Rosa. We went to a 'borlote,' which is the word the 'pochos' used for 'dance'" (22). Although one might expect my grandfather to label the culture of the "pochos" the inferior antithesis to his "aristocratic" Mexican hacienda culture, he refuses to judge the Americanized "pochos" for their cultural hybridity, and even befriends them and their families.

18. In a passage that links my grandfather's personal sense of cultural superiority over Anglo Americans—because of his "aristocratic" Mexican childhood—to the racism faced by Mexican Americans of that period, "Memorias" depicts the efforts of Mexican immigrants in the late thirties to attend a movie at a local segregated theater in Fillmore, California: "In the movie theater in town, which is still in business today, the racists segregated us from the whites. This, after we had worked perhaps sixty hours during the week—and six days a week. They did the same to the Mexican children; there was a separate school for them. We, of course, protested both of these actions. As we told the whites, we paid money for these services like anyone else in town. . . . In any case, the 'theater' was in fact a cheap little shack filled with 'white' fleas compared to the theaters in my own country. I came from a culture where even the burros sang opera! You see, almost every large town in Mexico has an opera house, quite unlike the U.S." (36).

19. Keith Spalding, the multimillionaire co-owner of the Spalding Corporation and "hacendado" of Sespe Ranch, died in 1963. He left three thousand dollars in his will to my grandfather, who had been a loyal worker at the ranch for nearly thirty years.

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20. According to Rodolfo Acuña, "By 1910, foreign investors controlled 76 percent of all corporations [in Mexico], 95 percent of mining, 89 percent of industry, 100 percent of oil, and 96 percent of agriculture. The United States owned 38 percent of this investment, Britain 29 percent, and France 27 percent . . . [and] in contrast, 97.1 percent of the families in [the state of] Guanajuato were without land, 96.2 percent in Jalisco, 99.5 percent in Mexico (state), and 99.3 percent in Puebla" (149–50).

21. I use "colonial" in quotes because that period actually ended in 1825 with Mexican independence from Spain; Lira Pérez was born in 1856.

22. Elsewhere in "Memorias" my grandfather uses the same phrasing to describe the Pérez side of his family, and as my Aunt Esther told me in a telephone call in May 1995, he always signed his name Francisco Róbles Pérez. In the same conversation, Esther told me that, although my grandfather only briefly mentions these Róbles forebears in "Memorias," she believes he was as "proud" of the Róbles ancestors as of the Pérez. Nonetheless the emphasis throughout the early part of "Memorias," the only section in which my grandfather discusses his origins, is on the nobility of the Pérez line. Based on my conversations with him and Esther, I don't think this was entirely conscious, however. As I've pointed out, the only mother he ever knew was the Róbles "matriarch," Doña Hipólita, and "Memorias" clearly shows that he has fond memories of life with her. His remembrances of the Róbles grandparents—conveyed in "Memorias" as well as in conversations with me and with Esther—are completely removed from the Róbles-Pérez clash later initiated by Lira Pérez, and rekindled in 1992 by Berta Róbles (which I discuss in the following section). Esther's recollection of her father's castigation of Dominga, when considered alongside Francisco's refusal to acknowledge Paulo at Petra Róbles's funeral in 1984, as well as the subsequent revelations brought to light by the Róbles narrative, have led me to conclude that my grandfather must have viewed Paulo as a bastard and interloper—and a legitimate member of *neither* side of his family. Though Paulo was in fact a closer "blood" relative than half-brother, since their mothers, Juliana and Dominga, were sisters, from my grandfather's perspective, as he expressed it once to Esther, Dominga was to blame for a great many of his father's troubles, and most significantly the death of Juliana; this would explain why they are set apart in "Memorias" and in his conversations with family members from his cherished memories of the Róbles grandparents.

23. Following his father's example, my grandfather portrays Díaz in a flattering light. He is described in several passages as a

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benevolent dictator or national hero. The revolutionaries who rose up against Díaz and this dictator's legacy, says grandfather, thus "fought against a government which was unique in the history of Mexico . . . one which had maintained the country at the high social and economic level of the other great nations in the western world at that time" (4). Not surprisingly, Casimiro, Lira Pérez's first son, the product of his second marriage, to Matilde, joined the federal army to fight against Villa's insurrection.

24. See Adams, Eakin, and Couser. Couser has summarized the tendencies in recent autobiography studies in the wake of the structuralist and post-structuralist critique of the subject: "the trend in autobiography studies has been to erode the distinction between fiction and nonfiction and to deconstruct the apparent relation between the self and its textual embodiment. . . . Autobiography, then, is seen not as produced by a preexistent self but as producing a provisional and contingent one. Indeed, that self is seen as bound and (pre)determined by the constraints of the linguistic resources and narrative tropes available to the 'author'" (19).

25. Though Paulo later adopted Pérez as his legal name, he was reared by the Róbleses and never had contact with members of the Pérez family. So while Berta Róbles married a "Pérez," she wed into a family which was known by her own as the Róbleses.

26. In his Last Will and Testament, Lira Pérez names as his "only heirs" four sons (including Francisco), two daughters, and his fourth wife, María Herrera, who is also his executor. My translation of part of the will reads as follows:

> In the city of Gómez Palacios, the house on North Morelos Street, on the thirteenth day of May, 1919, in the presence of the witnesses Mr. Don Filemón Turado and Mr. Don Antonio Correa, I state that, being in a condition of grave illness, and feeling that I am on the brink of death, it is necessary to set forth the following terms [of my will] . . . .
>
> I am the owner of a house in Jerez, Zacatecas. The house is comprised of a corner room, bedroom, kitchen, hall, living room, corral, and waterwheel/well. [I own] two tracts of land in San Juan de las Calabasas and a granary in the same location. The granary [is situated] on a smaller piece of land toward the south, but since I do not have the [proper] papers before me, I cannot specify the measurements [of any of these properties].
>
> It is my wish to leave as my only heirs my wife María Herrera and my children, named Casimiro Pérez, Marcos Pérez, Francisco Pérez, Lucas Pérez, [and] Diega and Paula Pérez. I assign to my wife the role of guardian and administrator [of my estate], whose function will be to divide the shares [of my property] in equal parts, in a manner that she is best able to carry out.

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With nothing more to express, I conclude the present private disposition [of my will]. Since I have no other recourse and am in a foreign region, I have not written this document in the proper legal manner before a Notary Public.

27. Although he had two elder half-brothers, the oldest, Casimiro, disappeared in 1914 while serving in the Mexican Federal Army, and may have died in one of the battles of that year, while the second, Marcos, the one in the photo, during adolescence was incapacitated by mental illness and drug addiction. My grandfather told me that in 1913 or 1914, while on leave, Casimiro returned to Jerez and asked his father for his portion of his inheritance. Lira Pérez sold a tract of land and gave Casimiro the money from the sale. The story from my grandfather is that Casimiro believed he would be killed in the civil war and wanted to spend his inheritance. It seems very likely that he *was* killed in one of the battles of 1914—possibly in Torreón, where his father was living. If Casimiro had ever returned to Jerez after 1921, my grandfather would have learned of it through his younger half-siblings or perhaps through María Herrera's family. As for Marcos, if he had been brought with Lira Pérez when he was forced to leave Jerez, I'm certain that my grandfather would have mentioned it. Apparently Marcos was left with his mother Matilde, but was later brought to his father in Torreón. Marcos is mentioned in "Memorias" for his strange behavior as a teenager in Torreón—namely, public nudity and petty crime. The last we hear of this half-brother is when my grandfather, leaving in 1921 to go to the U.S., says goodbye to him at the train station. My grandfather says the Herrera family never knew what became of Marcos; the story I've heard is that he left town when still a teenager and wasn't heard from again.

28. A number of biographical parallels between my grandfather's childhood and the life of the Mexican novelist Juan Rulfo stand out. Though born in 1918, ten years after my grandfather, Rulfo was from the state of Jalisco, which borders Zacatecas. (The name "La Bufa," the mountain landmark near the city of Zacatecas described in my grandfather's account, comes from the hill's resemblance to a pig's bladder—an allusion used in the Rulfo quote on page 19.) Both writers were born into the landed upper class, and both were orphaned as young children during the civil war. Rulfo's hometown, Apulco, was sacked and burned by armed insurgents, and his father was murdered in 1923 while fleeing. According to some scholars, Rulfo's father was killed by peasant insurrectionists, though in an interview the author denied knowing who was responsible. *Pedro Páramo,* Rulfo's nostalgic recreation of the hacienda community of his childhood, addresses orphanhood and "origins" as central themes. A more remarkable coincidence is Rulfo's family name. After his mother died in 1927,

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Rulfo was taken in by her relatives in Mexico City who required that he use their name—Pérez (the author's full name was Juan Pérez Rulfo).

29. Two stories which provide corroborating, albeit "circumstantial," evidence are my grandfather's narrative of Lira Pérez's forced flight due to his expected execution by revolutionary insurrectionists, and my grandfather's recent suggestion that Dominga Róbles was responsible not only for her "relationship" with his father, but also for his mother's death. The latter narrative tells us that my grandfather may well have always known about the Róbles complaint, and perhaps of the rape accusation, and may also make it somewhat easier to see why he could never acknowledge Paulo as his half-brother.
30. Sánchez discusses at length the suppressions and exclusions in the Californio *testimonios*. Her study is premised on the idea that the nineteenth-century world of Alta California "was not an idyllic 'pastoral' society," but rather a "labor-intensive . . . economy with a largely 'unfree' labor force made up of Indian men and women whose ancestors had lived on those lands for generations" (168). Thus, all Californios, according to Sánchez, do not get equal time in the testimonials. "The nonpropertied classes and what [Hubert] Bancroft calls the plebian 'humble *ranchero*' are largely absent or mentioned only in passing. Significantly the Indians are very visible as the Other of the Californios. . . . In every case, representation [in the testimonials] follows the ideological perspectives of dominant segments of the Californio population, perspectives often at odds with those of other factions, given regional and social divisions of Californio society" (10).
31. According to my father, Anthony Pérez, during one week in 1942, 80 percent of the families in Sespe Village were evicted because of their involvement with a labor strike against the Spalding-owned ranch.

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Coleridge's *Biographia*: When is an Autobiography Not an Autobiography?

H. J. Jackson

I start from the premise that Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* is one of the wonders of Western literature and a gold-mine for students of autobiography. Here, I know, I lose a number of potential readers, but since this essay is dedicated to probing and, so to speak, attacking the work from various angles, it seems to me important to establish at the outset my admiration of it and my respect for its author. Age cannot wither it, nor custom stale its infinite variety: after almost thirty years of close acquaintance, the *Biographia* continues to surprise and fascinate me. This essay aims not to rob Coleridge's work of its mystery but to explore some of the features that make it as interesting as it is, and in the process to add a little to our understanding of the history and definition of autobiography in general.[1]

The reception of the *Biographia* has been bedeviled from the beginning by questions of form and genre. What is this chaotic thing? Coleridge himself, anticipating objections as always, refers to it as an "immethodical . . . miscellany" (*Biographia* 1:88). Reviewers of his own period agreed, describing it as "wayward and capricious," an "endless maze," "a strange medley" (Jackson 328, 323, 376). The most forceful of them, William Hazlitt, wished that Coleridge had produced the autobiography that his title appeared to promise, and gave an exasperated—and very funny—summary of the actual contents (Jackson 295). At the end of the century Leslie Stephen observed mildly that the book was "put together with a pitchfork" (3:355).[2] And in our own time a distinguished Romanticist has situated it in the category of "rubble-heap works" (McFarland 21). Probably the most widely shared view in the twentieth century, and certainly

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the one that has governed the way the *Biographia* is excerpted and taught, is the idea that it is not an autobiography at all, but a pioneering work of literary criticism. By turning a blind eye to seventy percent of the text, commentators are able to present Coleridge as an astute critic of the contemporary critical scene, as a theorist second only to Aristotle, and as a practical critic *avant la lettre*. It must be obvious, however, that a solution that requires us to ignore most of the book is not ideal. I shall eventually come back with a different answer to the question as to what kind of work the *Biographia* is; for the moment I propose to give it a new name, and to consider it in the first instance as a conundrum.

* * * * *

The puzzle presents itself straight away on the title page, which announces in a mixed set of typefaces that what we have in our hands is *Biographia Literaria; or Biographical Sketches of My Literary Life and Opinions. By S. T. Coleridge, Esq.* The echo of Sterne's much-loved *Tristram Shandy* (its full title *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman)* has been pointed out before, notably by Donald Reiman, who also comments shrewdly on the class indicators—the "Esquire" and the Latin title—that subtly warn off unsuitable readers such as women and the undereducated. But I want to take up another matter by drawing attention to the very first word. The original title seems to have been "Autobiographia Literaria," for Coleridge described the work while he was writing it as "an Autobiographia literaria, or Sketches of my literary Life and opinions" (*Letters* 4:578–9). Why should he have changed his mind and called it a biography—"biographia"—instead, confirming and compounding the paradox by adding the tautological word "biographical" to the subtitle? Or rather, since I do not presume to deal with cause or intent, what is the effect of his having done so? Answers to this question may be found in the historical conditions under which the *Biographia* was published; in distinctive features of Coleridge's project; and in the conventions of autobiography at large.

The term "autobiography" is itself so familiar that it takes some effort to realize that there must have been a time when it was not; but in fact it was new and awkward when the *Biographia* appeared in 1817. The *Eighteenth-Century Short-Title*

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Catalogue lists only one eighteenth-century work under the title of "autobiography," namely Benjamin Franklin's; but that, we find, acquired the title only in 1849, having been published originally as his *Life . . . Written by Himself.* The first example of the word "autobiography" in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is Southey's use of it in the *Quarterly Review* in 1809, the second Carlyle's in 1828. Setting aside diaries and journals and confining ourselves to continuous narrative, we discover that earlier writers chose to describe autobiographical works, whether fiction or nonfiction, as "memoirs," "apologies," "confessions," "histories," or (like Franklin) simply "lives," and that this practice persisted well into the nineteenth century: so we have Colley Cibber's notorious *Apology for his Life, Written by Himself* (1740), Defoe's *Life and Strange Surprizing Adventures of Robinson Crusoe . . . Written by Himself* (1719), Hume's *Life . . . Written by Himself* (1777), Smollett's *Adventures of Roderick Random* (1748), De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* (1822), Hogg's *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824), and so on. This is not to say that Coleridge could not have led the way and hazarded the word "autobiography"—nor indeed that he did not, for at one point in the text he describes "the ludicrous effect of the first sentence of an Autobiography" (2:237). The reviewers soon used the word, or its derivatives "autobiographer" and "autobiographical," fairly unselfconsciously (Jackson 327, 295). But on a title page it would have been a novelty, and the *Biographia* exhibits some sensitivity on the score of linguistic innovation (1:168–72).

Moreover, and more interestingly, the fact that a separate name was only just emerging indicates something about prevalent attitudes towards this kind of writing, and hence other reasons for Coleridge's preference for "biography." Biography and "Self-biography"—the latter a word that appears in one of the *Biographia* reviews (Jackson 322), and that we can see creeping back into fashion today—were as yet virtually indistinct. Samuel Johnson, the great authority of Coleridge's youth and the colossus that loomed over his maturity, had expressed the opinion that the best person to write a biography was the subject of it. Boswell reminded readers of this assertion in the opening lines of his own monumental biography (1:25). First plainly declaring that "Those relations are therefore commonly of most value in which the writer tells his own story"

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(*Idler* 262), Johnson goes on to consider some of the objections to that position, in a passage that deserves close attention:

> The writer of his own life has at least the first qualification of an historian, the knowledge of the truth; and though it may be plausibly objected that his temptations to disguise it are equal to his opportunities of knowing it, yet I cannot but think that impartiality may be expected with equal confidence from him that relates the passages of his own life, as from him that delivers the transactions of another. (263)

Johnson's essay had begun by articulating the idea, now a truism, that biography falls between fiction ("romance"), which is entirely imaginative or make-believe, and history writing, which deals with the hard currency of documented fact.[3] In the sentence I have quoted, however, he chooses to emphasize common ground rather than difference: the biographer is a sort of "historian" from whom we expect "truth" and "impartiality." Though these assumptions may seem naive, they were the assumptions of the age and they persist to this day. Biographies and autobiographies still get written because someone thinks it necessary to set the record straight with new evidence or new perspectives. Readers have always been alert to signs of authorial bias, though now we may be quicker than Johnson and his contemporaries were to question the reliability of the historian as well as of writers further along the spectrum that has fantasy as its opposite end. Both writers and readers tend even now to believe that the aim of biography, however imperfectly it may be achieved, is truth as the writer sees it, "truth" at least with regard to the record of events and their apparent causes that is, as the context makes clear, the limited realm that Johnson was concerned with. So his dictum wears better than might have been expected. His final remarks bring the reader into the biographical or autobiographical enterprise in a strikingly up-to-date way: ". . . he that speaks of himself has no motive to falshood or partiality except self-love, by which all have so often been betrayed, that all are on the watch against its artifices" (*Idler* 264).

Truth, impartiality, and setting the record straight are conspicuous themes in Coleridge's work, and the supposed proximity of the biographer to the historian may have been a factor—I do not say, a conscious one—in his choice of "biographia" over "autobiographia." From the very start,

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Coleridge represents himself and his friends Southey and Wordsworth as the victims of malicious reviewers in "this AGE OF PERSONALITY, this age of literary and personal GOSSIPING" (1:41).[4] As an alternative to the arbitrary and prejudiced detraction of anonymous reviewers, he offers not only a positive account of his friends' moral characters (especially Southey's) that has greater claims to authority than the reviewers' versions because of Coleridge's personal acquaintance and his willingness to put his name to his work, but also an account of their writings (especially Wordsworth's) that appears to be more judicious because it is careful to discuss both strengths and weaknesses, and because it is ostensibly based on an impersonal critical system, "fixed canons of criticism, previously established and deduced from the nature of man" (1:62). Impartiality and impersonality are explicitly avowed goals:

> by impartiality I mean an honest and enlightened adherence to a code of intelligible principles previously announced, and faithfully referred to in support of every judgment on men and events; not indiscriminate abuse, not the indulgence of an editor's own malignant passions, and still less, if that be possible, a determination to make money by flattering the envy and cupidity, the vindictive restlessness and self-conceit of the half-witted vulgar. . . . (1:214)[5]

This passage is not often quoted, and it is easy to see why. It does not show Coleridge in a particularly favorable light, for although the sentence begins by praising the lofty ideal of impartiality, it goes on to display quite vehement class bias and "indiscriminate abuse." In fact it represents another aspect of the *Biographia* seen as a conundrum in which self-contradictions are so thick on the ground that Donald Reiman proposes "the art of equivocation" as a principle of unity in the work. Coleridge inveighs against gossip and then purveys it; fulminates against plagiarism, and then commits it; deplores self-indulgence and then exhibits it. He advocates system and produces chaos; declares himself a democrat and at the turn of the page casts aspersions on the mental capacities of the rural poor. This habit of self-contradiction has a positive function that I shall return to later. For the moment, I simply maintain that no one capable of reading the *Biographia* has ever failed to notice some of these transparent inconsistencies, or to take warning from them. The common response seems to have been

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to consider them more or less charitably as a sign of weakness arising, as Johnson had said it might, from that traditional enemy of impartiality, self-love.

Self-love, egotism, or (in its mildest form) vanity has always been a recognized hazard in autobiography, and the conventions of the genre dictate that sooner or later, the writer has to address the problem and justify the work on other grounds—generally by an appeal to some higher motive. Readers may or may not accept this justification: some of Coleridge's reviewers commented on the exhibition of "self-importance" or "inveterate and diseased egotism" in the work (Jackson 322, 329). But approaches to the issue vary. Colley Cibber had defied convention to the extent of cheekily acknowledging the motive of vanity (3), but he was promptly satirized by Pope in the revised *Dunciad* (especially 257–65) and by Fielding (18–19). Hume began his autobiographical memoir with the statement, "It is difficult for a man to speak long of himself without vanity; therefore, I shall be brief" (1). Like most of his predecessors, Coleridge sought by various means to avoid the appearance of egotism.[6] He declares in his very first page that "the least of what I have written concerns myself personally" (1:5). He reprints a satirical sonnet designed to make fun of "*doleful egotism*" (1:27), mocks the Fichtean *Egoismus* or "I itself I" (1:158–9), and returns the charge of "irritable" vanity on the critics themselves by asserting that real genius is indifferent to reputation and only fakes and failures are not (1:38). Egotism, then, is the mark of a minor talent. He also simply denies being motivated by self-love (1:219) or self-importance (2:237)—though this is one of those flagrant cases of contradiction that I have mentioned before, a protest that draws attention to its contrary, for at many points we find him gratuitously preening himself: "In this biographical sketch of my literary life I may be excused, if I mention here, that I had translated the eight Hymns of Synesius from the Greek into English Anacreontics before my 15th year" (1:247). Erasing himself from the title page by choosing "biographia" rather than "autobiographia" is one of the subtler ways in which Coleridge may have been trying to avoid the imputation of egotism.

Returning to the title page, we might pause over another historical consideration in Coleridge's decision. Some of the implications of his giving a classical title to his English text have

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already been mentioned: it would link his work to heavyweights such as Milton's *Areopagitica* and serve as a caution to unsuitable readers. But it is also noteworthy that there is a tradition of such titles in autobiographical literature, for example in Browne's *Religio Medici* (1643), Dryden's *Religio Laici* (1682), and Baxter's *Reliquiae Baxterianae* (1696). Later there would be Newman's *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (1864). Furthermore, there had been an earlier *Biographia Literaria*, though we do not know that Coleridge was familiar with it.[7] The first and only published volume of John Berkenhout's *Biographia Literaria; or a Biographical History of Literature: containing the Lives of English, Scottish, and Irish Authors, from the Dawn of Letters in these Kingdoms to the Present Time, Chronologically and Classically Arranged* appeared in 1777. It was, as its title indicates, a biographical dictionary, providing brief accounts of writers born up to the end of the sixteenth century (later volumes would have been dedicated to later figures), organized according to categories of writer—historians and antiquarians, divines, lawyers, travellers, poets, and so on. Many reference books of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries adopted Latin titles, the encyclopedias—*Britannica, Londinensis, Metropolitana,* etc.—being the most obvious example. The encyclopedias, however, are easily outnumbered by the biographical dictionaries. Between 1740 and 1789, for example, Robert Watt's 1824 *Bibliotheca Britannica,* itself a case in point, includes the *Biographia Classica, Biographia Britannica, Biographia Dramatica, Biographia Evangelica,* and *Biographia Medica.* In 1805 there was a *Biographia Scotica.* Coleridge's first readers would have associated his title with the factual solidity of this reference-book tradition. Watt does not list "autobiographia" at all.

It is moreover a striking feature of the *Biographia* that it is concerned with more than one literary life, and that the one life with which it is principally concerned is generalized so as to become an example to other, especially younger, writers. In the course of the *Biographia,* Coleridge builds up a composite portrait of "literary life" that is based partly on his own experience and partly on that of others, including the reader.[8] Indeed the two sources are intertwined, for Coleridge often describes himself when he appears to be writing about others, and sometimes speaks for writers as a class when he appears to be telling his own story. He was, as Plutarch puts it (though

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his subject was love) "as skilled as ivy at self-entanglement" (43). The portrait may be thought of as a triptych, for it has, like many of Coleridge's ideas, three parts or aspects, the first of them ideal, the second comic and antiheroic, and the third pragmatic. Coleridge himself, as the subject of the narrative, flits in and out of all three parts, and is most conspicuous, in his Shandean mode, in the second. But literary biography is also an important resource, for Coleridge is able to appeal to the record of other lives to reinforce the lessons that he has to teach out of his own. On this count too, *Biographia Literaria* makes an appropriate title.

According to Coleridge, the ideal literary life is that of the acknowledged geniuses who get on with their work in the sort of Olympian self-sufficiency that is the subject of Chapter Two. There Coleridge calls upon the examples of Chaucer, Shakespeare, Spenser, and Milton to prove his contention that only hacks are anxious about contemporary reactions to their work, the great writers being superior to criticism:

> The records of biography seem to confirm this theory. The men of greatest genius, as far as we can judge from their own works or from the accounts of their contemporaries, appear to have been of calm and tranquil temper, in all that related to themselves. In the inward assurance of permanent fame, they seem to have been either indifferent or resigned, with regard to immediate reputation. (1:33)

Though Coleridge is ostensibly defining a standard of perfection, he is also obliquely representing (and congratulating) himself, for "a tried experience of twenty years, has taught me, that the original sin of my character consists in a careless indifference to public opinion" (1:44). Similarly, when he tells us that Shakespeare was always ready "to praise his rivals, ore pleno" (1:35), he is demanding admiration for a quality of magnanimity that he himself has just exhibited in his praise for the poetry of William Lisle Bowles, and will display again in his defense of his own rivals, Southey and Wordsworth.

But even the opposite pole of literary life, as it is represented in the account of his own faults and failures, draws upon other biographical materials besides his own and tends, like Wordsworth's account of the development of imagination in the *Prelude*, to turn itself into a typical or representative

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experience. When Coleridge describes his literary education, he describes one face in a crowd. He and his schoolfellows all submit themes to their master and are all alike subject to his power. The first person is plural: "He sent us to the University excellent Latin and Greek scholars, and tolerable Hebraists" (1:11). Even when he has to admit that his first publications were justifiably criticized for "a profusion of new coined epithets," he makes this into a general point by maintaining that the early work of Shakespeare and Milton had the same defect, so that it appears to be a common weakness of youthful authors as well as another bond between Coleridge and his twin idols (1:6).

Finally, the pragmatic middle ground of the literary life contains perhaps less specifically Coleridgean biography than either of the others (unless it be considered as a form of fantasy or wishful thinking that reveals the mental life). It does, however, depend upon a knowledge of other literary lives. In Chapter Eleven Coleridge sums up his advice to aspiring writers in capital letters: "NEVER PURSUE LITERATURE AS A TRADE" (1:223). The recommendation that young writers should seek their livelihood in a salaried profession and let writing be a by-product of it is reinforced both by the counterexample of Coleridge's personal struggles and by reference to "the biography of literary men" over the centuries, from Cicero and Xenophon to Herder, Erasmus Darwin, and William Roscoe (1:229).

There has been some debate as to whether the *Biographia* should be interpreted as a cautionary or an exemplary narrative.[9] On the one hand we find Coleridge presenting his own experience as an example of what not to do. The advice against pursuing literature as a trade supports this reading, as do the beginning and end of the text, the introductory epigraph from Goethe ("He wishes to spare the young those circuitous paths, on which he himself had lost his way") coming round again in Coleridge's final claim of having at least "earnestly endeavoured to kindle young minds, and to guard them against the temptations of Scorners" (2:247). All the Shandean jokes in which the author comes on stage as a buffoon—being held up to ridicule by his schoolmaster, trying to sell a subscription to a tallow-chandler in Birmingham, or travelling with a seasick company to Germany—likewise suggest that this figure is not for emulation. On the other hand, the predominant tone of the

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book is serious and the author is at pains to exhibit his achievements as well as his failures; besides, as McGann is the latest to point out, the book itself is an achievement, and "the story he tells reveals a person whose work was steadfast in its principles" (236). That is to say, the work visibly practices what it preaches, and it can therefore be described as exemplary in effect.

In this matter the *Biographia* once more demonstrates that it is possible to be both A and not-A—not just now A, and then not-A in the gradual unfolding of a discursive text, but A and not-A simultaneously. To take another very small example, a sample from the microscopic level, the narrative proper begins, in the second paragraph of the work, not with the school years that had chronological priority and that most readers think of as first, but with this innocuous sentence: "In 1794, when I had barely passed the verge of manhood, I published a small volume of juvenile poems." It looks like—and is—a statement of fact, but the date should have been 1796, so it is also not a statement of fact. It looks modest (the volume is "small," the poems are "juvenile," the author is "barely" an adult), but it is also a boast (although he had "barely passed the verge of manhood," he had already published a volume of verse). The pattern of double and contradictory meaning is characteristic and significant.

I suppose it has not gone unnoticed that I have so far avoided those useful terms "subjective" and "objective," even though the tension between personal revelation and the author's desire to appear "objective" (i.e. distanced, impartial) could be said to account for several of the features that I have been discussing: the choice of "biographia" over "autobiographia," the link with reference books, and the reliance on historical and biographical data. The reason is that the question of the relationship between subject and object—or as modern theorists in the area of life-writing prefer to say, the concept of subjectivity[10]—is at the heart of the *Biographia*, but Coleridge's treatment of the issue does not disguise its complexity, and I have not wanted to cloud the issue by using key terms casually. In the brief summary that follows, I aim to bring out the relevance of this difficult part of the work to the autobiographical project as a whole. For my purposes, Coleridge's sources—the topic of much critical debate—are virtually irrelevant.

Coleridge circles round the whole mind-body problem for quite a long time before attacking it directly in Chapter Twelve;

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indeed, he weaves it into the narrative and critical chapters as well as into the philosophical ones. He points out the ambiguity in the language involved: "I" or "me," for example, may be used either to refer to "the act of self-consciousness" or to "the external image in and by which the mind represents the act to itself" (1:73). He does his best to dismantle, or at least to reveal flaws in the Cartesian dualism that teaches "the absolute and essential heterogeneity of the soul as intelligence, and the body as matter," in order to prepare the way for a more satisfactory metaphysics that will reveal body and spirit to be "different modes . . . of a common substratum" (1:129–30). He hints that the stakes are high, no less than the existence or nonexistence of God, that is, "of an infinite spirit, of an intelligent and holy will" (1:120). Then, like Descartes, he begins to work back from the multifariousness of experience to one irreducible starting point. He provides his own definitions of "subject" and "object," "subjective" and "objective," insisting that they are not mutually exclusive but correlative terms: you can't have one without the other (1:252–5). Every representation involves both a representing or "representative" subject and a represented object, and a subject cannot be known except through the vehicle of an object, in fact it "becomes a subject by the act of constructing itself objectively to itself" (1:273). The end of Coleridge's quest, the radical identity of subject and object and the irreducible origin of all finite subjects and objects, is the "I Am" of Exodus 3:14—in Hebrew the Tetragrammaton transliterated as "Yahweh" or "Jehovah," or as Coleridge says reverently, "the absolute self, the great eternal I Am" (1:275).

Once arrived at what appears to be an ultimate truth ("truth is universally placed in the coincidence of the thought with the thing," he has said [1:254]), Coleridge begins to move outward, preparing to build up anew the complex world of experience that he had stripped down to essentials. It is true that he aborts this part of the process in its early stages, interrupting his much heralded deduction of the human imagination with the notorious fictional "letter from a friend" (1:300), but it is quite unfair to dismiss his theory of subjectivity as a spectacular failure, as critics occasionally do.[11] The very attempt, had it been no more, in an autobiography consolidates the impression of the author's extraordinary self-awareness. It also elevates autobiography (or at least introspection) almost to the status of

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a religious obligation as it engages and exercises "the sacred power of self-intuition" (1:241): "Only in the self-consciousness of a spirit is there the required identity of object and representation; for herein consists the essence of a spirit, that it is self-representative" (1:278). And it incidentally grants further significance to the "biographia" of the title, the figure represented in a biography being object to the representing subject. In Coleridge's work the unity of subject and object suggests the presence of a third thing, the self—or, to put it another way, readers infer a self from the display of mind at work on the materials of memory.

The palpable contradictions of the *Biographia* take on a more positive aspect when they are considered in the light of the underlying philosophical idea of the continuing constructive interplay of subject and object. (Again I do not infer conscious intent.) Given his habitual ways of thinking, which are of particularly vital importance in a work such as this, Coleridge could not afford to be much bothered by inconsistency; and in fact he promoted it. "Extremes meet" was a favorite proverb.[12] The psychological analysis of oxymoron in a lecture on *Romeo and Juliet* is perhaps the locus classicus for the expression of his attitude: there he maintains that "there is an effort in the mind when it would describe what it cannot satisfy itself with the description of, to reconcile opposites and to leave a middle state of mind more strictly appropriate to the imagination than any other when it is hovering between images: as soon as it is fixed on one it becomes understanding and when it is wavering between them attaching itself to neither it is imagination" (*Lectures* 1:311). The *Biographia* makes a similar point in an interesting passage about Kant. Coleridge tries to argue that Kant must have been closer to Coleridge's own religious convictions than he at first appears to be in his writings. Coleridge observes that it would not have been prudent for Kant to disclose his views, and that in such a situation a philosopher "is constrained to express himself either mythically or equivocally" (1:157). And as in the *Romeo and Juliet* lecture, Coleridge indicates that pure ideas cannot be expressed directly: "An IDEA, in the highest sense of that word, cannot be conveyed but by a symbol; and, except in geometry, all symbols of necessity involve an apparent contradiction" (1:156). Self-contradiction gives the *Biographia* a dramatic and destabilizing

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character that to my mind is an asset. It is one of the manifestations of a distinctive vitality.[13] It is both consistent with and contributes to the dialectical pattern of mental progress that shapes the whole work, the pattern that Coleridge memorably images in the figure of a water-insect (1:124). Reverting to the micro-example of the sentence about the small volume of juvenile poems, we see that it can be both modest and boasting, both fact and not-fact simultaneously; that by being both, it is neither one nor the other exclusively; and that it obliges us to posit an underlying or (to change the metaphor) overriding personality capable of such complexities.

* * * * *

What bearing does all of this have upon the original question about the form and genre of the *Biographia*? It must be evident by now that I believe that the *Biographia* belongs squarely in the set that we label "autobiography."[14] The final impediment to this way of thinking is, inevitably, Coleridge himself, who uses the word once only, when he mildly makes fun of the author of an autobiography but promises some day to write his own—implying, as the editors point out, that the *Biographia* is not it (2:237). One of the more charitable of the earlier reviewers noticed this passage and made a sensible comment, namely that the *Biographia* does live up to its title in that it refers to "circumstances that have a relation to his literary life only . . . with respect to his birth, parentage, and personal history, he says almost nothing; these he tells us may afford materials for a separate work which he seems to contemplate" (Jackson 357). The "separate work" that the reviewer assumed Coleridge had in mind would have perhaps been closer to biography (self-biography) than to autobiography, for autobiographies are commonly more specialized and selective than biographies. The personal stake that autobiographers have in their stories generally means that they have to clear their names of some particular slurs or blow their horns for some particular successes. (Samuel Johnson's relatively recent, sharply focused *Lives of the English Poets* is a significant exception that may itself have been a model for Coleridge's literary life.) Spiritual autobiography is an example that comes readily to mind: from the Augustinian prototype through the works of seventeenth-century dissenters that Coleridge loved (Baxter's *Reliquiae* and

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Bunyan's *Grace Abounding*, for instance), to the Methodist testimonials in the evangelical magazines of his day, and so on through Mill (a secular version) and Newman to the likes of the ghostwritten autobiography of Malcolm X—all these conversion narratives aiming to convert others in their turn do as the *Biographia* does, suppressing other aspects of the writer's life in order to concentrate on what matters most. Augustine's *Confessions* is indeed one of the few models in the autobiographical mode to which Coleridge alludes explicitly in the *Biographia*. Citing it from memory—or at all events, not quite accurately—he gives it as an example of the way in which philosophy may support religion, at the same time invoking the conversion archetype that informs his own narrative:

> Nevertheless, I cannot doubt, that the difference of my metaphysical notions from those of the Unitarians in general contributed to my final re-conversion to the whole truth in Christ; even as according to his own confession the books of certain Platonic philosophers (*libri quorundam Platonicorum*) commenced the rescue of St. Augustine's faith from the same error aggravated by the far darker accompaniment of the Manichaean heresy. (1:205)

As Carolyn Barros has pointed out, "Autobiography is about change, about a series of transformations, and this is an expectation we bring to any autobiographical text" (1). Since it is about change, autobiography as a genre has tended to be more tolerant of inconsistency and contradiction than biography, in which authors are inclined and expected to create a coherent portrait. (That said, it needs to be acknowledged that biographers also often fall back on the coherence of paradox, making the chiaroscuro portrait one of the available topoi in their field. Pope's *Sporus*, Johnson's *Savage*, Byron's *Napoleon*, and for that matter Mailer's *Marilyn Monroe* are all classics of this kind.) Here too the Protean protagonist of the *Biographia* and his self-contradicting ways can be comfortably accommodated.

Life-writing in general, but autobiography in particular, is a host (as opposed to a parasite) genre. This characteristic may have to do with the naturalness of autobiography: as all experience presents itself through the filters of the individual receptor, so the first-person perspective of autobiography is

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open to all forms of human experience. Augustine's *Confessions* includes long reflections on time and memory, and trails off in an exposition of the Book of Genesis. Richard Baxter's *Reliquiae* will pass unpredictably from accounts of the subject's health and successive publications to a narrative of events or a collection of letters and official reports: it is a vehicle for history. Even the egregious Colley Cibber subordinates his personal history to an account of the theatre and the famous players of his day. Once the basic requirements—that they supply "narratives of the lives of particular persons," as Johnson says of biography (*Rambler* 319), and that the name of the subject be the same as the name of the author on the title page (Lejeune 13–14)—are satisfied, it almost seems that anything goes, and that any kind of freight may be carried in this vehicle. In 1803, long before the *Biographia* made its way into print, Coleridge jotted down his idea of it in a notebook entry that places it solidly, whatever Coleridge's own later qualifications, disclaimers, or denials, in the autobiographical tradition: "Seem to have made up my mind to write my metaphysical works, as *my Life*, & *in* my Life—intermixed with all the other events/or history of the mind & fortunes of S. T. Coleridge" (1:1515).

NOTES

1. I wish to express my continuing gratitude to WIPE, the work-in-progress group of the Department of English at the University of Toronto, for its advice about this paper; and especially to Linda Hutcheon.

2. This phrase is quoted, along with other examples of the divided response to the *Biographia* over the centuries, in the standard edition by Engell and Bate (1:xliii). A brief summary of the scholarship devoted to the defense of the unity of the *Biographia* appears in McGann 234.

3. Johnson's other important statement about biography, *Rambler* 60, defines biography as consisting of "narratives of the lives of particular persons" (319). Like the *Idler* essay, *Rambler* 60 contrasts biography and history, though in a different way, drawing attention to the narrow focus and use of domestic detail in biography as opposed to the broad sweep and public perspective of history.

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4. I use "Coleridge" in the conventional way as shorthand for the narrative persona or in Booth's phrase the "implied author." Other ways of considering Coleridge's persona are suggested by several critics, including Wallace (*Design* 11–13) and Vogler (35).
5. Other important statements about the ideally impartial critical system or "machine" appear in 2:107 and 2:110–11.
6. Stephen Bygrave, however, argues that Coleridge's attitude towards egotism was one of "ambivalence" (3) in that he thought of it as "at once a flaw in, and power of, the self" (11).
7. I am grateful to John Beer, of Peterhouse, Cambridge, who brought this work to my attention.
8. Chapter Three, for example, contains an appeal to "those, who by biography or by their own experience are familiar with the general habits of genius" (1:65).
9. These are traditional alternatives in the virtually unquestioned didactic rationale for all forms of life-writing. To cite a pedestrian version of this commonplace from Coleridge's own time and from a book that he annotated, the biography attached to *The Complete Works of the Late Rev. Philip Skelton* observes that "Biography conveys very useful instruction, setting before us the lives of eminent men, that we may imitate their virtues, or avoid their vices" (1:155).
10. An intelligent guide through the complexities of the concept of subjectivity in contemporary theory (political, psychological, semiotic, autobiographical, and feminist) is Paul Smith's 1988 book *Discerning the Subject*—still, as I write in 1995, a valuable survey and critique of the literature.
11. For example Belsey (77), answered with a sophisticated deconstructionist argument by Vogler (39–40).
12. Instances are collected in Coleridge's *Marginalia* 1:518n.
13. Samuel Johnson, once again, offers a sort of defense of the humanness of self-contradiction: "'Inconsistencies,' answered Imlac, 'cannot both be right, but, imputed to man, they may both be true'" (*Rasselas* 33).
14. And though we might now be inclined to quarrel with her emphasis on "design," it should be noted that Catherine Miles Wallace came to much the same conclusion in 1981: "accept the autobiographical character of the *Biographia*, and soon its obscurity begins to resolve into an intelligible, sophisticated, difficult design" ("Function" 216).

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"I Then Was What I Had Made Myself": Representation and Charlotte Charke

Sue Churchill

Charlotte Charke's autobiography has dismayed critics who seek to categorize the woman in the text. The problem has often been a lack of recognition that Charke presents herself in a variety of roles, making no apparent attempt to construct a unified identity or "psyche" which will reconcile any contradictions or demonstrate an evolution of self. Examining the extant portraits of Charke offers a handy illustration of some of the "selves" she offers. Probably the most familiar of these portrayals represents Charke in relationship to her father, Colley Cibber. The daughter fascinated with and challenging the father is featured in a Van Loo painting of Cibber; the stage is stolen by a little girl, commonly assumed to be Charke, darting in from behind to seize her father's pen. The rebellious daughter appears in a more comic guise in an engraving of a scene from Charke's autobiography, where four-year-old Charlotte dresses up in wig and greatcoat to impersonate her father. A stage portrait by Dandridge represents Charke as a willful, self-possessed young actress, richly dressed with head held high and proud. And finally, a portrait of Charke as a respectable older woman with an expression of good humor and insight opens the 1755 first edition of her autobiography, *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Charlotte Charke.*

All these figures and more appear in the *Narrative,* predominating at different points in the text. One surviving image of Charke, however, does not stem from her *Narrative.* A nineteenth-century engraving depicts a scene from an account of Charke's last years written by Samuel Whyte which appeared in the *Monthly Mirror* in June 1796.[1] Whyte's "Anecdote of Mrs.

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Frontispiece to the 1755 first edition of
A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Charlotte Charke
Photo courtesy of the Harvard Theatre Collection
The Houghton Library

Charke" and the engraving represent her in a "hovel" as a defeated and repentant old woman.[2] Whyte's account of the end of Charke's life profoundly influenced subsequent readings of her autobiography, imposing a tragic ending on her *Narrative*, obscuring the originality of her autobiographical form, and especially her use of comic representation within the work. In addition, examined outside of traditional forms and apart from her celebrated role as her "father's daughter," Charke and her work display previously unrecognized matriarchal themes.

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If it had not been so influential, the *Mirror* article, which contradicts at every point Charke's final image of herself, could be viewed as simply ludicrous. Whyte's rhetorically charged account, written forty years after his interview with Charke, characterizes her as "humbled and disconsolate," and attaches derogatory adjectives to every possible noun. Simple household objects become emblems of her degraded "broken" condition: her delft plates are "coarse," her black pitcher is chipped, her chair is "maimed," and the bellows she uses for a portable writing surface are "mutilated." Charke's maid is described as a figure of questionable gender, ragged and "squalid," with a "tawny neck," "torpid voice," and "hungry smile." Charke's own petticoat is "dingy" (94–95). Whyte's condescending and satirical tone is set in his opening description of Charke's neighborhood. Marked by archaisms and a mock epic tone, it locates her "wretched hovel" in the sewer, where the "priests of Cloacina" deposit the "offerings from the temples of that all-worshiped Power" (94).[3] The story closes with a description of the formerly affluent and powerful Charke ending "the career of her miserable existence on a dung hill" (95). Thus from beginning to end the article figuratively "smears" Charke with excrement.

Samuel Whyte's image of Charke as a pathetic figure dominates biographical and scholarly representations of her and her work throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. A brief review of responses to Charke's *Narrative* demonstrates the influence of Whyte's "anecdote." In its first year, the *Narrative* sold rapidly through two editions and was serialized in summary form in *Gentleman's Magazine* (Ashley viii). In this summary it was treated entirely as a humorous odyssey, as pure entertainment. The *Narrative* then fell into obscurity until the publication of the article by Whyte, thirty years after Charke's death in 1760. Early in the century, Charke was included in various biographical works, most notably the 1812 edition of *Biographia Dramatica*. In this entry editor Stephen Jones quotes almost the entirety of the *Mirror* article, stresses the apologetic nature of her *Narrative*, and characterizes her as a tragic figure (106–07).[4] *Biographia Dramatica* set the tone for nineteenth-century representations of Charke and interpretations of her work. Influential texts such as John Genest's *Some Account of the English Stage from the Restoration in 1660 to 1830*

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(1832) drew heavily on Jones, and many, like Clarke's *The Georgian Era* (1834), follow Jones in using the *Mirror* passage as a tragic ending to Charke's story (Genest 568–70; Clarke 555–56).

Twentieth-century scholars continue to draw on these nineteenth-century works and their use of the *Mirror* passage. In 1969, for instance, as part of the first scholarly consideration of Charke's autobiography in this century, Charles Peavey quotes at length from the *Mirror* and the nineteenth-century sources cited above, twice referring to Charke's "singularly tragic life" (1, 10). Sidonie Smith closes her discussion of Charke in *A Poetics of Women's Autobiography* (1987) with lengthy quotations from a nineteenth-century editor of the *Narrative* who characterizes Charke as an unfortunate victim (122), and in perhaps the most influential recent scholarly consideration of the *Narrative*, Felicity Nussbaum quotes from the *Mirror* account and describes Charke's life as "incontrovertibly tragic" (196).

Twentieth-century scholars who read neither the *Mirror* article nor the nineteenth-century sources are still likely to be influenced by them because of their impact on the available resources on Charke.[5] The editors of both the 1929 and 1969 editions of the autobiography quote the *Mirror* in portraying the end of Charke's life as desperate. Important reference works follow suit. In *British Women Writers: A Critical Reference Guide*, Janet Jones echoes the *Mirror*'s description of Charke's end in a "wretched hovel" (138). The entry on Charke in *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers, and Other Stage Personnel in London, 1600–1800* (1975), quotes nearly all of the "anecdote," including more of it than of Charke's own *Narrative* (176). Like many other sources, the *Biographical Dictionary* seems to take the *Mirror* account as absolute truth while repeatedly questioning the veracity of Charke's narrative, although factual errors in the entry suggest that its author may not have read the autobiography, or at least not carefully.[6]

A question of literary authority therefore begins to emerge. The common assumption that Charke ended her days in most desperate poverty and despair, publishing her *Narrative* "literally to keep her[self] from starving to death" (Jelinek 38), ultimately depends on the *Mirror*'s report, since there is very little other historical evidence.[7] As for Charke's own account of the period covered in the *Mirror* article (1755), though she

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describes the poverty of earlier periods of her life at length, the end of the text speaks of happier days and hope. At peace with herself if not with her father, "Charlotte" is "transported with joy" at having left the strolling life behind her.[8] Having successfully completed her autobiography, she describes with optimism her plans for opening an "oratorical Academy" and for her forthcoming novel *Henry Dumont* (267). In contrast to Samuel Whyte, Charke leaves us with the hopeful portrait of a respectable and vital older woman, a verbal version of the portrait standing at the beginning of the *Narrative*. Whatever the ending of Charlotte Charke's "real" life, the ending of the text cannot be termed tragic.

Why then has a report of Charke's sad end which confutes her own *Narrative* been accepted for two hundred years as an authoritative, factual, and possibly even sympathetic account, instead of a humiliating attack on Charke? While the forces driving this denigration were undoubtedly complex,[9] and while the motivations of its author may remain obscure, the violence of the account suggests that for Whyte, Charke represented a considerable menace to society. Whyte specifically parodies Charke's domesticity, and domesticity, I believe, is precisely where Charke and her *Narrative* posed the greatest threat. Whyte attributes Charke's downfall to her being "unmindful of her advantages and improvident in her pursuits" (95). As I shall discuss further, these fatal flaws of negligence and improvidence stand in particular opposition to the domestic ideal so powerful at the time of Whyte's writing and throughout much of the nineteenth century.[10]

Conversely the ease with which twentieth-century scholars have accepted the *Mirror* portrait of Charke as a tragic figure may result from the fact that such a representation conveniently served an existing critical consensus. The Charlotte Charke portrayed in the *Mirror* clearly fits one of the conventional and restrictive paradigms of the early woman writer offered by the twentieth-century critical establishment. This Charke is the Woolfian "Judith Shakespeare," described by Margaret Ezell in *Writing Women's Literary History* as a figure who rebels against paternal authority, "forfeits all social respectability to enter the arena of male commercial literature," and therefore must fail to earn a living in a commercial setting and "self-destruct" or be crushed (10–11). The insidious influence of Whyte's account

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on both sympathetic and unsympathetic interpretations of Charke's text illustrates the dangers Ezell points out in unconsciously importing nineteenth-century assumptions or representations of women writers into twentieth-century readings. In the following reading of the *Narrative* I will attempt to "re-vision" Charke's text, freeing it from the distortions of nineteenth-century narratives and ideology.

* * * * *

Writers who have accepted Samuel Whyte's version of Charke's desperate end tend to view her autobiography as a tragic or "failed" confessional attempt toward reconciliation with her father and patriarchal society. This is the basic position of the editors of *A Biographical Dictionary*, as well as Nancy Cotton, Patricia Meyers Spacks, Estelle C. Jelinek, Sidonie Smith, and, most recently, Erin Mackie.[11] These writers approach and assess Charke and her text differently, but they all emphasize the centrality of the father/daughter relationship in the text. Spacks identifies this confessional "patriarchal" paradigm as spiritual autobiography, with its central allegory of the "Prodigal Son" (88–91). Charke's use of this tradition is indisputable. The *Narrative* contains the motifs of thankfulness and accountability, that mixture of self-congratulation and self-disparagement, which distinguish the genre (Starr 35). Acknowledging herself as "Colley's Folley," Charke piles up instances of her gullibility and lack of discretion and judgment. She peppers the text with expressions of gratitude to all manner of persons, and speaks often of her repentance and return to "prudence and reflection" (ix, 15, 61). The critical question, however, is *how* Charke uses the genre and its patriarchal paradigm. Directly addressing this tradition and its central narrative, she compares herself to the Prodigal Son. She uses this paradigm to question her father's behavior, indicting him for "o'er-shooting" his reason and denying the forgiveness that a "Superior Power" mandates and models (120–22, 275). As Felicity Nussbaum explains, the *Narrative* demonstrates not Charke's personal failure or self-betrayal, as Smith and Mackie would have it, but her betrayal by the patriarchal narrative or male spiritual model, and thus *its* failure (188).

Nussbaum points out that Charke uses comedy to disrupt and challenge the male spiritual model: "the suffering innocent

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oppressed by male tyranny gives way to a comically aggressive character" (196). The heart of the text offers a prime example of such a use of comedy. At the central point of the spiritual autobiography, just after the narrative of her life has been interrupted by an account of the "current event" of her father's final rejection of her, Charlotte's fortunes are at their lowest ebb (119–27). Her economic situation is desperate and she is considering suicide. Charke depicts herself poetically at this point as "the comfortless array of tattered garments on a frosty morning" (137). And yet, even in this clear image of spiritual emptiness, an overriding sense of humor, an impulse toward laughter, belies the seriousness of the situation. At this moment of Charlotte's darkest despair, the crucial point when conversion and salvation typically occur, "Providence, who has ever been my kind friend and director," does indeed come to her aid—not in the form of either spiritual salvation by "God, the Father," or economic redemption from Colley, the father, but in the form of a loan which sets her up selling sausages (137–38)!

The dominant comic aspect of Charke's work should not be surprising, for she spent her life working in comedy. Her twenty years of professional acting were primarily in comic theatre; her broad knowledge of the comedies of her period is well-documented.[12] Her own writing prior to the *Narrative* had been exclusively dramatic comedy: *The Art of Management*, *The Carnival: or Harlequin Blunderer*, and *Tit for Tat: or Comedy and Tragedy at War*. The textual summary that Charke gives at the end of the *Narrative* lists the episode of the failed reconciliation with Colley Cibber as only one of seven main parts of the book, and she underscores the humorous passages, offering evidence that she herself considered the work a comedy. Likewise, while they bill Charke as the "youngest daughter of Colley Cibber," the advertisements for the first two editions highlight its humorous scenes and do not otherwise mention her father.[13]

Largely ignored by accounts in the tradition of the *Mirror*, the use of comedy and comic character remains the most neglected aspect of Charke's *Narrative*. Critics such as Smith and Mackie seem to have missed her joke completely. Their interpretations of the text force them to *deny* its humor. Mackie charges that Charke "tries to convince her readers that they are laughing, and that they are laughing with her as well as at her," claiming that Charke's humor "glorifies" her folly and

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"trivializes" her life (847). Smith interprets the "Charlotte" of the text as a straightforward sentimental heroine, and can only interpret her humor as masochistic "self-parody" (109, 103). The dedication passage Smith uses as an example offers an illuminating case in point.[14] While Charke pokes fun at herself in it, depicting herself as a female Don Quixote, the central parody of the dedication is the parody of literary form, of the flattery and pomposity of the dedications to plays with which Charke was highly familiar. She even refers to *The Provoked Husband* in the course of the dedication! This dedication very cleverly sets up not only the characterization of "Charlotte," but also the paradigm of comic drama and the genre inversion which Charke experiments with in the rest of the text. Her powerful awareness of genres is demonstrated by the full title of one of her puppet shows: "A Whimsical Comical Farcical Operatical Allegorical Emblematical Pistolatical Impromptu Medley called Tit for Tat or Comedy and Tragedy at War."[15] This interest in genre also appears in the quotation on the title page of her autobiography: "*This* Tragic Story, *or this* Comic Jest, / *May make you* laugh, *or* cry—*As you like best*." Taken from the prologue of John Gay's *The What d'ye Call It*, this epigram is often cited as an example of the problematic dualism of the text, the conflict between the rogue's story and the penitent confession. Smith, for example, finds in it a duality of narrative desire and intention which "unhinges" the narrative (109). Like Smith, I find Charke's use of this quotation highly revealing, but not revealing of a destructive psychology.

Richard Bevis has described Gay's play as a satirization of genre which addresses the confusion of literary form in the period. According to Bevis, this was a time of "generic confusion," of generic experimentation, and the proliferation and flourishing of nontraditional forms: "Anyone who glances at a list of the types of plays put forward in the period can see that the traditional genres, while still important, were crumbling, and that their stones were being used to erect a variety of quite different buildings" (*English Drama* 240; see also 212). *The What D'ye Call It*, as Bevis sees it, is a "tragi-comi-pastoral farce," a burlesque of pathetic tragedy and sentimental pastoral. The play's "Art" consists of "the interweaving of the several kinds of the Drama with each other, so that they cannot be distinguished" (*English Drama* 164). In identifying her work

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with this play, Charke points to her experimentation with genre, rather than to some personal or emotional confusion. The *Narrative* was part of a contemporary literary movement toward the development of new forms. In its hybridization of spiritual autobiography and comic drama, her work, like the other nontraditional forms Bevis discusses, attempts a "mixture of sentiment with laughter" (*Laughing Tradition* 66). That the considerable poignancy in the text is juxtaposed with farce does not, however, make it insincere. Outside the boundaries of traditional categories or genres, the presence of one need not negate the other.

Nussbaum recognizes but does not fully investigate the complexity of Charke's text, its manipulation of genre, and the central role of comedy in this manipulation. Ultimately Nussbaum groups Charke with the "scandalous memoirists," and while I agree that Charke's work, like that of the memoirists, undercuts the ideology of the gendered subject that was being codified at the time (179), grouping Charke with these more predictable and formulaic writers distorts her work and masks its more resistant nature. According to Nussbaum, the scandalous memoirists work within the female stereotypes of "lascivious whore" or "seduced maiden" (187). While "loosening restrictions on the representations of desire," they make "female interiority an object of consumption and a commodity for exchange," satisfying a voyeuristic impulse (185). Thus their memoirs ultimately serve to "define and perpetuate sexist assumptions about women: they reproduce heterosexual difference" (181). Nussbaum's classification of the *Narrative* with these scandalous memoirists returns Charke to familiar patriarchal paradigms; the "fallen woman" seems not far removed from Samuel Whyte's portrait. But Charke's text does not hinge on a "fall from chastity." It refuses eroticization, specifically omitting heterosexual romance and relations, explicitly rejecting the topic of "passion" (12, 138–39), and in this way anticipating the later female memoirists discussed by Nussbaum, women who draw attention to the "inadequacy of the erotic, the pathetic and the spiritual" (199).

Nussbaum's argument also underscores Charke's fascination with the male role. Nussbaum maintains that Charke and the scandalous memoirists challenge gender ideologies by representing themselves as "something they are not: men" (198).

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More specifically, Nussbaum claims that Charke "fills the typological void left by renouncing scriptural, epic or allegorical models for her character—not with the tragic female figure of Jane Shore, but with comic male figures" (197). Emphasized in studies by Sallie Minter Strange and Lynne Friedl, these "rogue" figures are also recognized as a source of narrative dualism by Smith and Mackie. Like the engraver who chose as his topic Charke's childhood impersonation of her father, or the painter who depicted her "seizing" her father's pen, these critics pay exaggerated attention to the male role in Charke's autobiography. While I would not deny Charke's interest in that role, this emphasis has obscured her considerable interest in female roles and the powerful female presence in the text—a presence essential to the comic structure of the work.

Looking at the female presence in Charke's text is like looking at a 3-D picture: once the perceptual focus on the "male" in the foreground of the print is relaxed, the background reveals itself to be a mosaic of images of women. The men in the text are most conspicuous in their absence. Although repeatedly invoked, Charlotte's father actually appears in the text only twice: once, registering "Surprize, Pleasure, Pain and Shame" when Charlotte, aged four, takes her triumphant ride through town on an ass (22), and later, at the family conference where she is effectively disowned (124). Even here he is depicted in the act of leaving. Likewise Charlotte's first husband, Richard Charke, is present only in the negative as a failed husband and absent father whom Charlotte must trace "from Morn to Eve through the Hundreds of Drury" [prostitutes] (in fact, we see nearly as much of his mother as we do of him) (50–54, 77–79).

A far more central presence in the events of the text is that of Charlotte's Mother, who manages the household, nurses Charlotte when sick, supervises her daughter's education for which Colley is given credit, and provides the props, space, and audience for Charlotte's various "performances" (1–50, especially 31, 26, 16, and 22). Primarily characterized by her dedicated affection for her child, even though nearly driven mad and "deprived of her life" by the shock of Charlotte's last childhood "prank" of running over a small child, Katherine Cibber retained her "inexpressible Fondness and tender Regard" for Charlotte "to the latest Moment of her Life" (80, 49). Focusing on Katherine Cibber's role also reveals a

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fascinating feminization of the prodigal son, with the mother in the position of the forgiving parent, Charlotte serving as "Prodigal Daughter," and her eldest sibling Catherine Brown appearing as the resentful older daughter.[16] Like the prodigal son, Charlotte repeatedly identifies herself as her mother's favorite, while the mother/daughter relationship in the text reveals Charlotte to be a loyal but thoughtless character, a "mischievous" and ridiculous "schemer" (23, 29). Charke affirms that unlike her father, her mother would never have denied her, and if she had lived, would have relieved the economic struggle on which her "prodigal" story rests (80). Charlotte makes this conclusion explicit in her last mention of her mother, when she places herself, Katherine Cibber, and Catherine Brown in their respective roles in the Prodigal drama:

> As I grew up, I too soon perceived a rancorous Disposition toward me, attended with Malice prepense, to destroy that Power I had in the Hearts of both my Parents, where I was perhaps judged to sit too triumphant, and maintained my Seat of Empire in my Mother's to her latest Moments: And, 'tis possible, had she lived, my Enemy might not have carried this cruel Point, to prevent what I think I had a natural Right to receive, when I so earnestly implored it. (123)

Charlotte is speaking here of her father's "pardon," but we can translate it also to mean her economic birthright, which two pages later she specifies is what has been denied.[17] It is also noteworthy that Charke later identifies the greatest help given to her as coming through the matriarchal line, when her uncle sets her up in a "publick" house for the sake of her "dear Mother" (148). Charke suggests that a world of female power, the world of the matriarch rather than the patriarch, would reflect the divine order of the prodigal allegory in a way that her "real" world did not.

Charke's interest in female relationships continues throughout the text, as the "prodigal daughter" of the *Narrative*'s first part becomes her own daughter's "prodigal mother" in the second part. After her failed marriage, Charke enters the adult world of wage earning as a single mother. Between 1730 and 1742 she searches for ways to support herself "and child" before setting out as a strolling actress. Although Charke's concern with her maternal role has been almost completely

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ignored by previous scholarship, this emphasis proves highly revealing. She repeatedly testifies to her passionate concern and affection for "the child," even while she portrays herself as causing as much grief and suffering for her daughter as she did for her mother. The child's first extended appearance in the text occurs when Charlotte is jailed for debt. Not knowing what has become of her mother, eight-year old Kitty spends the night alone in "painful Apprehensions." When finally taken to Charlotte, with a "Heart full of undissembled Anguish,"

> She immediately threw her Head upon my Bosom, and remain'd in speechless Grief, with which I equally encountered her. For some Time the Child was so entirely sensible of our Misfortunes, and of the Want of Means of being extricated from them, 'twas with Difficulty I soothed her into a Calm. (92–93)

The child also appears prominently as her mother's partner in hawking sausage. When Charlotte becomes ill, she is "forced to depend upon the infant Industry of my poor Child" (142). Having recovered, Charlotte goes to the park for fresh air, leaving their meat on the table. A cur devours their entire stock, and the daughter joins her mother in suffering: "The Child and I gap'd and star'd at each other; and, with a Despondency in our Faces, very natural on so deplorable an occasion, we sat down and silently conceived that starving must be the sad Event of this shocking Accident" (143). Kitty works by her mother's side, supports her when ill, and is full partner in her various woes. Charke's discussion of her relationship with her child testifies to a steadfast female solidarity which contrasts sharply with the text's male/female relationships.

Despite her testament to the strong bonds between mother and daughter, Charke's representation of her own maternal behavior stands in sharp contrast to that of her own mother in the earlier part of the book. When Charlotte is jailed, for example, she sends the "poor little Wench" as a "melancholy Messenger," without eating or drinking, to deliver thirty-eight letters seeking aid. Ultimately so affected with the "Malevolence of my Fortune," the "poor Child" becomes dangerously ill. Returning from a pawn shop Charlotte finds her in strong convulsive fits,

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> in which she had lain a considerable Time, and no Mortal near to give her the least Assistance. I took her up, and overcome with strong Grief, immediately dropped her on the Floor; which I wonder did not absolutely end her by the Force of the Fall, as she was in Fact a dead Weight. My screaming and her falling raised the House; and, in the Hurry of my Distraction, I run into the Street, with my Shirt-Sleeves dangling loose about my Hands, my Wig standing on End, "*Like Quills upon the fretful Porcupine*," And proclaiming the sudden Death of my much-beloved Child, a Crowd soon gathered round me, and, in the Violence of my Distraction, instead of administering any necessary Help, wildly stood among the Mob to recount the dreadful Disaster. (98)

While Charlotte is putting on a show in the street, others are caring for her child inside.

What is Charke doing with this self-presentation? Throughout the text she refers to herself as "inadvertent" (149), "imprudent" (149), "thoughtless" (151), and "unaccountable" (64, 171). The primary attribute she claims for herself is "folley" (57, 63, 64, 73), and in fact Charke repeatedly depicts herself as an ineffective and inept mother. What we must remember here, however, is that Charke was also a consummate comic artist. *A Biographical Dictionary* portrays Charke during this period of her life as a versatile actress, a remarkable puppeteer, and an entertainment entrepreneur—in short, a woman of many successes, "impressive" in her theatrical skills (169–72). It points out that in the summer of 1734 Charke performed at least fourteen highly varied roles in a period of six weeks! During the 1742–1743 season, she not only managed productions of thirteen plays for the James Street Theatre, she also presented a new puppet show of her own commonly known as "Tit for Tat." This self-possessed and capable professional is the woman in the portrait at the front of Ashley's edition of the autobiography, but it is notably not the figure Charke develops at this point in her text, who for all the seriousness of the circumstances is clearly a comic creation. The scene depicting Kitty's illness is pure farce: the frenetic pace, the gross exaggeration of character, and the exaggerated action (most notably, dropping the child on her head), all contribute to the comic presentation. In this scene reminiscent of Punch and Judy shows, a burlesque of the maternal ideal, I believe Charke is casting herself in the role of "madcap" mother.[18]

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The *Oxford English Dictionary* describes a "mad-cap" as a reckless, wildly impulsive person; in modern times, a female. Within the conventions of eighteenth-century stage comedy, the female madcap tended to be a young girl, loquacious and extravagant. Placing the young single "mad-cap" in men's clothes was a standard comical inversion. At the end of the story or play, she returns to her sex and marries the hero; her cross-dressing thus becomes almost part of the courting ritual. The mother as madcap, however, while certainly a comic spectacle, is also a comic scandal, and a mother in men's clothes, using them for purposes other than sexual attraction, is even more outrageous.[19] Despite the strength of these scenes in the *Narrative* and their obvious suitability for illustration, no visual representations of Charke as "mad-cap" mother, as mother in drag, appear in her memoir—an absence which probably attests to the powerfully subversive nature of the image.

Charke not only recognizes she has "made a spectacle of herself," but introduces herself as "a Non-pareil of the Age," a "freak," and "one of the Wonders of the World" (iv, 13). She also recognizes and comments on the consequent alienation in the text:

> I dare answer for it, that some *delicate old Maid or prudent Wife,* will bless themselves at this strange Recital, and with vacant, up-lifted eyes, thank Heaven I was no Relation of theirs: *That they* did not wonder such an inconsiderate *Wretch should be so unhappy!* When, poor Devils! the same Fate would have drawn equal Incumbrances upon their gravities, and perhaps without the Advantage of Spirits to surmount them as I have done; for which THANK HEAVEN ALONE. (152)

Spectacle embodies a social protest, challenging behavioral norms (Russo 218). Charlotte's spectacle explicitly challenges the values and restrictions of the "*delicate old Maid or Prudent wife,*" and consequently, the domestic virtue they represent. In her account of eighteenth-century domesticity, Nancy Armstrong places "self display" or "spectacle" in strict opposition to the ideology of domestic virtue, describing the domestic ideal as the "personification of a peculiar combination of invisibility and vigilance" (76–77). Armstrong discusses the emergent domestic woman as a wise spender and tasteful consumer, a woman who effectively supervises or manages a

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household economy through regulating her own desires (59, 80–81). As the embodiment of visibility and negligence, of extravagance and excess, the maternal Charlotte turns this model upside down. A pointed example is her management of a public house. Upon receiving the money from her uncle, she writes,

> [I] precipitately took the first House where I saw a Bill, and which, unfortunately for me, was in *Drury Lane* that had been most irregularly and indecently kept by the last Incumbent, who was a celebrated Dealer in murdered Reputations, Wholesale and Retale. This I, through a natural Inadvertency, never considered, nor what ill Consequences must reasonably attend so imprudent a Choice of my Situation. (149)

Hurrying "with impatient Joy" to buy furniture, Charlotte gives "the asking price for every Thing I bought, and, in less than three Hours, my House was thoughtlessly furnished, with many Things I had no real Occasion for" (150). Upon opening the house, she holds an extravagant reception, and "I afterwards found, I had successfully run myself out very near seven Pounds, in less than twenty-four Hours, to acquire, *nothing at all*" (153).

The humor in this section, and so many others, comes from the contrast between Charlotte's behavior and the domestic ideal. As Lynne Friedl has shown, the domestic ideal was a "fiction" for the majority of the actual population of the time; its significance lay in the power of the image it offered. In discussing her marriage, Charke herself pointedly attacks the myth of "the chaste wife caring for her children at home and restraining, through her modulating influence, the excesses of her husband" (235–36). The stage provides Charke with ammunition. She invokes, for example, Lady Easy of her father's *Careless Husband*, but only to distinguish herself from that paragon of wifely virtue (77), and when chronicling her husband's infidelities, she aligns herself with Mrs. Sullen of *The Beaux Stratagem*, declaring that "nothing but the Age of *Methuselah*, could have made the least Alteration in his Disposition" (53). Charke even uses the reverses in her own history to challenge the domestic "fiction." Her daughter Kitty, for example, plays her most prominent role in the *Narrative* when she is eight years old, the exact age at which Charlotte

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had begun her formal education as an aristocratic, indulged child, who had footmen, servants, and a country home (25). That daughter Kitty must go to work instead exposes the economics of childhood and of "mothering."

It is Charke's sister Catherine Brown, however, who personifies the domestic virtue that Charlotte rejects. Charke snipes at Catherine Brown throughout the text, labeling her as her "Enemy" and the source of her troubles.[20] Even in appeals to her father, Charke often addresses this sister, the "Monitor" of the father and family (for example, 122). Portrayed as judgmental, self-serving, and excessively concerned with appearances and honor, Brown was particularly shamed by Charlotte's work as a sausage vendor: "the Arch-Duchess of our Family, who would not have relieved me with a Half-penny Roll or a Draught of Small-Beer, imputed this to me as a Crime" (138–39). Tight-fisted and vigilant, Catherine Brown represents the self-interest of the domestic ideal taken to its extreme—a domestic model that Charke indicts for its devaluing of charity and compassion. Nor was Charlotte Brown's only victim within the family. Another sister, "Brett," or Mrs. Marples (Elizabeth Cibber Brett Marples), was apparently another of Brown's victims, despite having "no Faults the Family can allege against her." Charke describes the generosity of this "foolish, fond" sister at length, declaring that in contrast to Catherine Brown, Brett "has been a universal Friend to her Brethren, or rather her Sister-hood" (68).

This notion of "sisterhood" or female community extends throughout Charke's text. Charlotte's benefactors are primarily female. Although her brother Theophilus sends an apothecary when Charlotte's child becomes ill, the greater debt is to his wife (102), and though a great lord occasionally makes a donation to her cause, Charke consistently represents women as her greatest benefactors, particularly women who assist her despite the paucity of their own resources. Though too many to enumerate here, in addition to her mother and daughter, her primary supporters include the ladies of Covent Garden (prostitutes) who bail her out of jail when everyone else deserts her (90–94); Mrs. Dorr, who hired Charke as a waiter during her cross-dressing stage and treated both "Charles" (Charke) and daughter very well (157–70); the Widow in Chepston, who sets her up in the pastry business and gives her a home (222–

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27); and finally, that other "Mrs. Brown" who becomes Charlotte's family in her strolling years, nurses her through her long illness, and even shares fully all of her meager economic assets with her friend.[21] Unlike Catherine Brown, Charlotte describes these empowering "sisters" as "foolish," "fond," "humane," "generous" and "compassionate," suggesting that sisterhood is built on the generosity and sympathy Brown lacks, and exposing the domesticity she embodies as antithetical to community, and to female community in particular.

The theme of sisterhood receives special emphasis near the end of the *Narrative*. After the Prodigal Son narrative breaks down, Charke attempts to create for herself what Paula Backscheider calls "the inexpressible role": "a life moving through time that is not defined by the moment of its marriage or sexual fall or by its relationship to a man" (146). No longer primarily a daughter or mother, Charlotte moves through her female odyssey sustained largely by a female network. In turn, her responsibilities are now to her friends, and particularly to Mrs. Brown.

When describing her years as a strolling actress, Charke stresses her strength and endurance. She survives a terrifying and miserable stay in prison (215–21). She walks eighty miles "without either Hat or Money" to obtain Mrs. Brown's small legacy (232–35). On another occasion, she walks for three days, "a most deplorable, half-starving Journey, through intricate Roads and terrible showers of Rain" (262). As she details the indignities and difficulties of the "strolling life," the comedy disappears. The text's ending is not funny, a breakdown which Susan Carlson's *Women and Comedy* may help to explain. Carlson argues that the comic heroine enjoys exceptional freedom and strength, an unusual power based in female community. Comic structures, however, are destructive to this female community, especially comic closure, which typically displays the failure or breakdown of female community through the capitulation of the strong woman and her reintegration into the conventional order, often through marriage (80–84, 159, 301). By insisting on her own powers of endurance, and by emphasizing female community, in the end of her *Narrative* Charke works against this typical pattern, refusing to make the trade-off that Carlson discusses, from "comic liberation to comic happiness" (21).

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Closure particularly seems to trouble Charke. Although positive in tone, the ending of the *Narrative* leaves "Charlotte" and her fate unresolved. Still unreconciled with her father, the future is wide open. Her concluding words create the impression that she is fumbling about. Calling attention to the lack of an ending, she offers only a summary of the preceding text.

> Tis generally the Rule to put the Summary of Books of this Kind at the Beginning, but as I have, through the whole Course of my Life, acted in Contradiction to all Points of Regularity, beg to be indulged in a whimsical Conclusion of my Narrative, by introducing that last, which I will allow should have been first. (270)

Flouting convention to the last, Charke writes an ending which denies ending, a "whimsical" conclusion. She implies that the narrative closes only because of a lack of further material: "As I have nothing farther to entertain my Friends with, as to my Life, I shall, with the humblest Submission, take my Leave of them" (277, see also 275). She promises, finally, to return soon with more laughs. The summing up and appeal to the audience in this ending resembles an epilogue from a play of the period, thus attesting further to the powerful influence of comic drama on the structure of the *Narrative.*

I believe that Charke's resistance to closure is no coincidence, neither a function of her situation at the time, nor a necessity based on historical fact. Her "open" ending is an artistic strategy, crucial to the literary statement that she was making. In *Spectacular Politics* Paula Backscheider argues that the refusal of closure can serve as social protest or act of resistance: "The dissident can emphasize that at this moment there are no satisfactory resolutions to problems" (147–48). The emphatically open end of Charke's *Narrative* is just such a political gesture. Unlike those critics who view her desire for reconciliation with her father as evidence of Charke's wish to return to the status quo, I see a play which ends with a failed re-incorporation into the patriarchal structure and an implied indictment of the structure. No reconciliation occurs; the madcap remains at large. With the help of her friends, the strong woman is still standing alone, independent, and if not happy, triumphant.

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Just as no portrait exists of the madcap mother of this text, there has been little critical discussion of the complex, sometimes funny, adult Charlotte I find at the end of the *Narrative*. My intent has been to foreground these previously neglected strong figures and to suggest the need for further consideration of Charke's use of comedy, particularly her comic female characterization. The female survivor I find at the end of the text may not represent the "real" Charlotte Charke any better than the victim figure of Samuel Whyte. The critical task I have chosen is, however, primarily comparative rather than biographical. Setting Charke's text against more typical cultural narratives or discourses—spiritual autobiography, domestic virtue, and comic drama—exposes the powerfully resistant and innovative nature of her work. By separating Charke's text from that of Samuel Whyte, and from the plots of patriarchy within which it has been closed, I hope to have contributed toward restoring the integrity of her powerful "Female Pen," letting Charke be all that she "made [her]self" (11, 147).

NOTES

1. Samuel Whyte (1733–1811) served as principal of the EnglishGrammar-School, Grafton-Street, Dublin. He was copublisher of Charke's *Henry Dumont*, and author of published works including two volumes of poetry, *The Shamrock* (1772) and *Poems on Various Subjects* (1795); a collection of literary miscellany, *Miscellanea Nova* (1800); and various pedagogical works such as *Thoughts on the prevailing system of School Education, &c respecting Young Ladies as well as Young Gentlemen* (1772), *Practical Elocution: or, The Art of Reading and Speaking in Public* (1763), *The Juvenile Encyclopedia*, and *A Short System of Rhetoric*. Information about Whyte and his publications appears in the printer's advertisements at the back of *Miscellanea Nova*, 281–84.
2. Information about the portraits of Charke and their sources is included in *A Biographical Dictionary*'s entry on "Charke, Charlotte, nee Cibber, later Mrs. John Sacheverell" (167–78), and in the Leonard Ashley edition of *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Charlotte Charke*. I do not discuss one portrait, a plumbago drawing by William Rosins of Charlotte and Theophilus with their father. Like several of the other portraits, it pictures Charke in youth with her father, and so does not alter my argument.
3. As readers of eighteenth-century satire will recognize, "Cloacina" is a diminutive of the archaic "Cloaca," or sewer.

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4. Stephen Jones edited and expanded the *Biographia Dramatica*, which had been originally published in 1764 by David Erskine Baker, and then updated and expanded by Isaac Reed in 1782.
5. In *Writing Women's Literary History*, Margaret Ezell demonstrates the powerful influence of nineteenth-century biographical dictionaries on twentieth century literary criticism. See especially Chapter 3, 67–70, and 82.
6. Charke is described as writing her autobiography in 1755 to support herself and daughter, even though it is obvious in the *Narrative* that her daughter was married and gone at this point. The entry also refers to an "anonymous" Oxendon Street landlord whose accommodations provoked Charke's amusing satirical verses—the *Narrative* makes clear that this was Charke's sister, Elizabeth Cibber Brett Marples (*A Biographical Dictionary* 176, 170).
7. George Speaight writes that a letter written by Charke in August 1759 requesting permission to hold a benefit for herself reflects her desperate situation (33–34), but especially in theatrical circles, benefits of this type were common, and the letter is itself open to interpretation.
8. In an attempt to distinguish author from character, I shall refer to the person in the autobiography as "Charlotte," the writer as "Charke."
9. The nature of the publication itself would have encouraged such a presentation. In the Preface to the initial volume of the *Mirror*, its editors identify the moral rehabilitation of the English stage as a primary concern (viii–ix). As a representative of an earlier theatrical era, Charke would have offered an easy target, and the depths of the fall of the daughter of Colley Cibber doubtless made good copy.
10. Nancy Armstrong particularly emphasizes the turn from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century in her discussion of the rise of domestic virtue (59–90, and especially 63, 89–90); for a description of the domestic ideal, see 59 and 76–81.
11. See Cotton 205; Spacks 75–77 and 174; Jelinek 38–40; Smith 104–105, 109, and 122; and Mackie 845, 850, and 862–63.
12. See, for instance, *A Biographical Dictionary* 169–72.
13. The advertisements give central billing to Charke's adventures: her "mad pranks," theatrical anecdotes, and vicissitudes of fortune as a strolling player.
14. The dedication is one of the funniest passages in the *Narrative*. Charke dedicates the book to her primary patron and benefactress: herself! She cites herself as one of life's "*greatest curiosities*" and "Incentives to the most *profound Astonishment*," and lists as one

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of the "WONDERFUL QUALIFICATIONS" by which she is distinguished her "exquisite Taste in Building" magnificent castles in the air "for which [she] daily drew out Plans without Foundation" (iv–v).

15. This title is given in full in *A Biographical Dictionary* (172). Like Charke's other plays, *Tit for Tat* shows the clear influence of Henry Fielding and the Haymarket Theatre.
16. Mackie notes but does not recognize the significance of this re-gendering (846).
17. While the history of Charke's estrangement from her father has often been discussed, it is seldom mentioned that Cibber had literally stolen his children's birthright, going to court against his wife in 1714 to acquire, and win, the money left to her and her children by her father and brother. In its entry on Colley Cibber, *A Biographical Dictionary* reports that he won for himself his children's legacy and his wife's personal money of thirty pounds per year, and then "spent his children's money during their minority" (240). Charke's complete break from her father coincided with the death of her mother, who was also apparently estranged from Cibber at the time (*A Biographical Dictionary*, s.v. Katherine Cibber), and with Charke's desertion by her husband and consequently her first economic independence. Thus Charke's parody of Cibber as "Lord Place" in Fielding's *Pasquin* (1736) may not have been the cause of their estrangement, as some have alleged, but rather a symptom.
18. Evidence throughout the test supports my contention that Charke's self-representation was deliberate. Young Charlotte's antics—impersonating her father, or playing doctor, gardener, groom, and guard—all underscore her love of props and jargon and her consciousness of the power of characterization. When pretending to be a physician, for instance, she would use Latinate words and thus "I put on significancy of countenance that rather served to convince them of my incomparable skill and abilities." "I thought it always proper to emulate the actions of those persons, whose Characters I chose to represent," she goes on to remark, "and indeed, was as changeable as Proteus" (36, 40–41). Even the mirror in the portrait at the front of the volume implies an awareness of self-presentation.
19. Pat Rogers discusses the uses of cross-dressing for sexual titillation, but lists Charke as an exception (251).
20. For significant mention or extended indirect reference to Catherine Brown, see 24, 66–70, 116, 122–25, 138–39, 171–73, 273, and 276.
21. Marilyn L. Williamson argues that late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century women writers' representations of women

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helping one another are "a mirror of a major purpose these authors had in writing: educating one another about the terms of their predicament and strategies for endurance" (312). Charke's text would thus not only depict, but actively advance female solidarity.

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Detecting a Diary: A Case Study from 1905

Anna Makkonen

A couple of years ago I was helping to organize a campaign to collect diaries for the Archives of the Finnish Literature Society. My name was mentioned in the press release as an expert on diaries, and as a result, I was interviewed on several local radio stations and on a national network. The address of the Archives was given in these programs.

Shortly after, I received a letter which had been forwarded to my university address from the Finnish Literature Society. There was no return address on the envelope, nor was there any letter enclosed. There was just a black notebook. I opened it and read the first page:

> 24 December 1905
>
> To you
>
> I have written this during the last two weeks in August and first two weeks of September and from 8 December through 20 December. It deals with past experiences, but I chose the diary form because it seemed easiest and most suitable for what I want to write about. I've written this because I had to —otherwise I would have become mentally ill. Why I send this to you hardly needs explanation. I feel that if you don't understand me now, you'll never understand me. I want to add that this is the greatest gift of love and trust I can give to anyone.

In the Finnish the preface is addressed to "you" in the singular, and for a fraction of a second I felt that I was being addressed, even though my eyes had registered the date, 24th of December, 1905. But of course I was not the you, but a third wheel, a voyeur in a two-person communication.

The preface sets a dramatic scene for reading; what follows is a decisive test for a relationship. I browsed the notebook, written in beautiful longhand, and turned to the last page. Here the narrator states that the times described in the diary had

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become a memory. What's left are "these pages which so poorly can depict all that I have felt and experienced this summer." The book ends this way:

> Now my life begins, life which in many respects will be different from the life I have led so far. I prepare myself for it as if I were preparing myself for a feast. So far I have only dreamed about life—now I want to live it.
>
> Life, life . . . you great and wonderful . . . you charming and frightening . . . what will you give me?

I read the book from cover to cover, but at the end I was as ignorant as in the beginning. The I and the You remain anonymous. The narrator-protagonist—let's call her Miss X—is a young woman about to enter the university, and the "you," Mr. Y, is a man she is in love with.

The notebook's three prominent themes are rebellion, love, and writing. First, rebellion. Miss X has promised her family that she would go to confirmation classes, even though she has been against the idea for the past two years. She doesn't agree with the sacrament of holy communion. Though no atheist, she reconsiders many of the tenets of the Lutheran Church. She sees confirmation as a rite of passage people accept without thinking. She herself goes through the fortnight of classes, but makes her decision at the dress rehearsal. She cannot act against her conscience. Her family is shocked, and wherever she goes, people reproach her.

This confirmation crisis is a manifestation of a deeper rebellion. When Miss X writes about current politics, and the clash between the old and the young in the Finnish party, she supports the radicals. She has read Darwin, Tolstoy, and Zola, and she dreams about a new world, freed from constraints and false conventions.

Love is the second theme. Mr. Y had left for Karelia at the beginning of the summer—to do what is not mentioned. There are rumors that he is seeing other girls. Another problem is differing views—he sees no reason to rebel the way the girl has done. Miss X is also hurt because he has broken her trust by showing one of her letters to his uncle. At the end of the summer they meet. She wants to talk, he doesn't. Obviously, his silence forces her to write. This long treatise is needed because the situation has not become better during the autumn.

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There is also another man in the text. Miss X mentions the visit of Veikko A, who is favored by her family. The couple talk about falling in love and about reading novels. Something had happened the previous winter, something Miss X doesn't want to think about.

Finally, writing: Miss X wants to become a writer. She reads a lot, admires young writers such as Eino Leino, Joel Lehtonen, and L. Onerva. She dreams about becoming famous. But her confidence often fails her; it's only during moments of inspiration that she can believe in her dream. And she writes well—she's good at making arguments, switching moods, building up thematic coherence.

Though busy with other things, the mysterious manuscript kept coming back to my mind. It was a real enigma. Where did it come from? Who had written it? If I published it and explained its origins in my preface, I remember wondering, who would believe me? Somebody sent me a manuscript written by an unknown person, addressed to another unknown. Too many unknowns: it doesn't sound believable. I might as well say I found it in a bottle floating in the sea or in an old trunk in the attic! Readers would take my preface for a parody, and read the book as a pastiche.

I was frustrated. I couldn't be sure of anything. Could I even assume that the author was a woman? After all, there are cases like the *Letters of a Portuguese Nun*, where a male author is claimed to have impersonated a female voice and gotten away with it. Could I even trust the fact that the manuscript was dated from the beginning of the century? Perhaps this was a trap—I remembered reading about art critics tricked into producing sophisticated interpretations about paintings done by gorillas. But the ink and paper seemed old, so I decided that there was no need to suspect forgery. I could stop being paranoid.

Autobiography or fiction—where should I make the great divide? As the narrator herself says in the preface, the text is written in the diary *form*. It is not an authentic journal, written day by day, but retrospectively, for a particular addressee. The narrator knows what is going to happen when she starts to write; she is only pretending not to know. This is diary fiction.

The structure of the text is not a simple one. First there is the preface, which is a kind of a letter, then the diary, written in retrospect, in which letters are embedded. On occasion the

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narration turns into a letter dated 28 July. The time of the narration and the time of the story seem to overlap at the end of the summer, when Mr. Y comes back from Karelia. Undoubtedly the black notebook is, at least on one level, an artistic effort, an exercise in writing. That the manuscript reads like a novel, does not, however, rule out the possibility that it is autobiographical. I had a very strong feeling that I was reading about events that had taken place, about feelings felt, that it was "authentic." But how could I prove it?

Philippe Lejeune's famous concept of the autobiographical pact, in which the writer, the narrator, and the protagonist are the same, didn't help much. There were no proper names, no title page or cover to look at; in short, no formal criteria to indicate in which register the text should be read. According to Lejeune, when the narrator-protagonist doesn't give his or her name, autobiography cannot be distinguished from simple fiction. "For any reader, a text written in the autobiographical style, which is claimed by no one, and a work of fiction are as much alike as two drops of water." And here there was no title page, which seemed to indicate the private nature of the text. Letters do not contain title pages.

But what if the title page was missing, what if the notebook was intended to be a novel? Hardly believable. Then what about the absence of names? The narrator omits her addressee's name, and her own. For certain other people she uses initials. One could claim this supports a fictional reading, for namelessness creates mistrust and therefore the hypothesis that we are dealing with fiction. After all, the use of initials is common in diary fiction, which of course imitates the habits of real diary keepers. But one could also argue for a referential reading. Miss X is afraid that Mr. Y might again break her trust and show the book to someone else. It might therefore have seemed better to be anonymous. And in any case, why would lovers need names, there's just you and me—and us, the plural of love. But when you're in love, don't you want to repeat the loved one's name? This could go on forever, arguing for one thing and the next moment turning it upside down.

Miss X left me intrigued and unsatisfied. The text was not enough for me; I wanted to get to the person behind the text. Who was she? I was certain that the narrator was writing about her own experiences. What happened to the relationship? Did

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the couple bridge the gap or drift further apart? Did she become a writer? Like a child I kept asking "And then what?"

In August 1994 I finally had the time to do some research. I read the manuscript carefully, looking for starting points or clues. The only concrete detail I had was that Miss X had gone to school in Lahti, a small town in southern Finland. Her own home was somewhere in the countryside, not too far away, because she dreams that Mr. Y skis to her home from Lahti, and she finds nothing strange in this.

In 1905 there was only one secondary school in Lahti, a coed *Lahden yhteiskoulu*. In those days all graduating students went to the University of Helsinki to take their matriculation exams. The university's archives contained information on each graduate. Three Lahti girls—Hilda Erikson, Kerttu Simolin, and Vilhelmiina Syrjälä—graduated in 1905. I ruled out Hilda because of her humble background, but Kerttu and Vilhelmiina were possible candidates for the role of Miss X. Both their fathers owned land, and Miss X talked about grayfish parties and a visit to a place called Sommarnäs, which must refer to a villa or a manor house.

The archivist told me that the collection also housed each graduate's school and matriculation exam records. I might as well look at their grades, I thought. Let's see who was good at writing—that might give me an extra hint. The archivist led me to the cellar where these documents were kept.

Enter the gothic convention. The secret will be revealed underground; the heroine must go through a maze of stairs and corridors before she discovers the Truth.

There was something I hadn't thought about. All students had to provide certificates from their parish registers, indicating their dates of birth, names of parents, and so on. These certificates also contained information about confirmation. Hilda and Vilhelmiina had been confirmed; I could rule them out of the game. Kerttu had not. Her certificate was dated in May 1905, so she could have taken the first communion later that summer, but she was also from Orimattila, not far from Lahti.

Pieces started to fall into their places. Vilhelmiina could be Miina, a friend mentioned in the notebook, and Miss X describes how she and her friends would gather at the Eriksons, where they would discuss "everything," and behave in ways young girls should not. Hilda's last name is Erikson. Kerttu Emilia

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Simolin, born in 1887, must be the girl who at the age of eighteen wrote the notebook, and whose documents revealed that she was good at languages and poor in mathematics.

According to the university records, Kerttu went on to study there from 1905 to 1908. In 1909 her name in the records changes from Simolin to Tuura, after her husband. The most shocking piece of information is that she died in 1919, at the age of 32. Now the end of the notebook was full of an ironic foreboding: the glorious life she expected to live didn't last long.

After these discoveries at the university archives, it was easier to proceed further. In response to my inquiries, the Orimattila parish register told me that Kerttu Simolin *had* attended the confirmation classes but had not been confirmed. Here was the decisive and documented proof. I also learned that Kerttu's daughter, Tuovi Tuura, was still living in Orimattila. By this time I had also found Kerttu's journalist husband, and two daughters, born in 1909 and 1910, mentioned in reference works. But Tuovi Tuura was a daughter I hadn't known about. I wrote to her and went to interview her in October 1994. She was waiting for me at the bus station. Frail, nearly eighty years old, she couldn't hear well and was slow in speaking. When we got to her home I noticed a large photograph of a young woman, dressed in an elegant winter suit, holding two little girls by the hand. A beautiful woman, a trace of sadness or defiance at the corners of her mouth. There were pictures of Kerttu's sisters and brothers, her parents, and a signed photograph addressed to her by the poet J. H. Erkko and dated 1906. Tuovi Tuura showed me many other photographs. Among other things, I found out that Veikko A. had lived at the Sommarnäs manor house. A rich suitor!

Tuovi Tuura was only four years old when her mother died, and she didn't remember much. Her aunts had burned many of the old papers; she definitely was not the person who sent me the notebook; she didn't even know what her mother had died of. A fourth child, a boy, died in the Second World War. Tuovi is the only one alive. She knew that her mother had translated some books. Later on Tuovi sent me two letters Kerttu had written to one of her brothers in 1918, at the time of the civil war. These letters deal with food shortages and a time of unrest and hunger, a huge contrast to the notebook written some thirteen years earlier.

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I continued my detecting. I hadn't thought about an obituary, but as a translator and wife to a journalist, there must have been one. There was. The translator of ten books, she had also published some original literary pieces and reviews. Characterized by the obituary as "a quiet and deep person," one "independent in thought and rich in talents," Kerttu was a "hard-working and modest guardian of her family," who still "made time for literary work." She hadn't stopped writing, after all. But I haven't found the literary pieces or reviews yet, and the national bibliography lists only four translations under her name. Her husband translated more—perhaps he published her work as his own. Published posthumously, Kerttu's last translation granted a thematic coherence to her life, and to my efforts. It is a translation of a romantic French novel titled *The Diary of a Young Woman*.

"Me and the Black Notebook" is a story of possession. I was obsessed by something I could call biographical desire. I wanted to know more and more, I wanted to make Kerttu live. I knew my quest would be futile, for people had forgotten her, and there were no documents. Whatever material I could find would be scanty. Only my imagination could fulfill my desire.

I found myself in a situation familiar from many postmodernist novels, such as A. S. Byatt's *Possession*. I began assembling a novel in my head. I would use diary entries and letters, I would mix the original diary—there must have been one—with the notebook to reveal how she was posing for Mr. Y. I would include poems and short stories Kerttu had written, whether I could find the real ones or not. Letters to her friends and family would appear. I would use the incident Kerttu recounts in the notebook about her childhood: a moment when her relatives read her secret papers and mocked her. Kerttu mentions that when writing her autobiography at the age of sixteen, she began it by dreaming about a friend to whom she could tell everything, whom she could lead into the "secret garden of her heart." I would be that friend.

I even started visualizing the characters. I didn't have much sympathy for Mr. Y, but I would make Veikko A. more appealing. He would represent the sexual desire the romantic and idealist-minded Kerttu didn't know she possessed. At this point I found myself thinking about Rhett Butler. Was my imagination really so poor?

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In June 1995 I attended a conference in London, called "Writing the Lives of Writers." Peter Ackroyd, who has written frequently about the problems of biography, chaired one session. When asked to give his views, the only thing he provided was the following aphorism: "If you want to lie, write a biography. If you want to tell the truth, write a novel."

I haven't actually started writing my novel, but in the course of my escapades, I have learned something about the stories that populate our minds. If I did write Kerttu's story, how would I see it? As a tragedy of a lost woman author, crushed by patriarchal society? As a story of rebellion and passion? In the end I would write my own story, as Kerttu's biography would become my autobiography.

But that is another story.

Kerttu Emilia Simolin, 1887–1919

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Reviews

John D. Barbour, *Versions of Deconversion: Autobiography and the Loss of Faith.* Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 1994. 238 pp. $35.00, ISBN 0-8139-1546-5.

Autobiographies recounting the experience of religious conversion have a long history, going back to the fourth-century account of St. Augustine. Barbour contributes to the study of autobiographies of conversion through an analysis of the loss of religious faith, which he terms "deconversion." In defining this term, Barbour distinguishes between "secularization" and deconversion. The former refers to a gradual fading of religious beliefs, and the latter to a conscious rejection of former religious beliefs, a dramatic reversal in which former beliefs are seen as not merely irrelevant, but incorrect. Barbour focuses on deconversion to examine why autobiographers reject religious beliefs, and to analyze hermeneutical and rhetorical strategies used to narrate the loss of faith. Autobiographers of interest to Barbour include those whose deconversion leads to another religious faith; those who embrace agnosticism; and those who use deconversion as a metaphor to interpret other experiences of personal transformation. A recurring theme is the centrality of issues of ethics and conscience in the deconversion decision.

The examination is divided into ten chapters, beginning with Augustine, John Bunyan, and John Henry Newman, who converted to what they perceived to be an "authentic" Christianity. Barbour returns to the theme of authentic Christianity in his discussion of Frederick Douglass, Charles Eastman, Malcolm X, and Lame Deer, who called for whites to deconvert from an understanding of Christianity which sanctioned injustice. The loss of religious faith as a metaphor for understanding and interpreting non-religious deconversion or other personal transformations is discussed in chapters about Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Thomas Carlyle, John Stuart Mill, and Jean-Paul Sartre. The aesthetic critique of Protestantism is examined in a chapter on John Ruskin and Edmund Gosse; another chapter discusses Mary McCarthy's and Anthony Kenny's rejections of Roman Catholicism. Four autobiographers—C. S. Lewis, Dorothy Day, Langdon Gilley, and Edwin Muir—are given a chapter on the apologetic use of the deconversion experience. Final chapters are devoted to deconversion from religious cults, and to the relation of issues of gender identity to deconversion narrative. Barbour concludes his study with an essay on the literary and religious significance of deconversion narratives.

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The book has two methodological difficulties. Barbour acknowledges the first in his introduction: in a sense, every conversion is a deconversion; every deconversion a conversion. Because of this intertwining of deconversion and conversion, Barbour gives much space to the discussion of conversion. This is a difficulty only because the book's title may mislead some readers. Readers will want to be alerted that Barbour's interest is in conversion: he simply focuses on the rejection of former belief which is part of the conversion process. His approach differs from other studies of conversion more in emphasis than in underlying concern.

A second difficulty is an occasional lack of focus, evidenced in a few ways. Not all the autobiographies fit Barbour's definition of deconversion as the conscious rejection of a former faith. Patricia Hampl, for example, whose conversion narrative is described in the chapter on gender and deconversion, describes her loss of faith as a mere "falling away" brought about by the need to reject parental authority. In another instance, the chapter on apostasy and apology begins with a definition of apostasy as an act of rebellion against God. Dorothy Day is one autobiographer discussed in this chapter: however, it is not clear that Day's conversion narrative, at least as recounted by Barbour, indicates such a rebellion. Barbour describes Day's conversion from an understanding of Christianity as a "life-denying" faith to a new understanding of Christianity which allowed her to discern "grace at work in the natural world." But from Barbour's description, Day saw her earlier rejection of the life-denying version of Christianity not as a rebellion against God, but rather as a rejection of some of the "psychological repressions" which can be involved in Christian belief and practice.

This book has several strengths. Barbour's analysis of religious metaphor in non-religious narrative is insightful. Chapter seven, for example, describes Sartre's ironic use of the conversion narrative to interpret his commitment to, and subsequent disillusionment with, a romantic ideal of literature as an end in itself, which Barbour calls "the myth of literature." On a more practical level, Barbour's work provides an excellent overview of widely varied experiences of deconversion and conversion. It would be useful to readers with a general interest in autobiographies of conversion, or to readers who need to choose an autobiographer for an in-depth study. The book may also be of interest to students of theology since, as Barbour suggests, a self-critical Christian theology would do well to be informed by the insights of those who reject Christianity. Finally, as Barbour writes in his closing paragraph, the accounts of deconversion in this book may have significance for any reader who struggles to find meaning in the loss of faith.

Given its unusual approach and its minor methodological difficulties, Barbour's study would be recommended most for

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graduate students or scholars who have some grounding in conversion literature, and can therefore read critically. *Versions of Deconversion* would be a good addition to a library with other literature on conversion. Unfortunately, the book lacks a bibliography, but it does have a general index.

Denise Eggers

V. P. Franklin, *Living Our Stories, Telling Our Truths: Autobiography and the Making of the African-American Intellectual Tradition.* New York: Scribner's, 1995. 464 pp. $30.00 cloth, ISBN 0-19-510-373-4; $15.95 paper (Oxford UP), ISBN 0-689-12192-X.

American autobiography has always been fascinated by the relationship between personal experience and ideology, and African-American autobiography is especially marked by this desire to turn one's life into a political or ideological treatise. As V. P. Franklin notes, the desire for "race vindication" and the nearly inevitable position as representative makes the African-American autobiographer's stance complex. Whatever the difficulties for autobiographers, their negotiation between individual and representative produces rich and compelling reading and makes African-American autobiography suitable for use in several fields, including anthropology, literature, sociology, and history.

Franklin chooses the fertile territory of African-American autobiography to explore the development of various strands of the African-American intellectual tradition. Franklin, who has also written *Black Self-Determination: A Cultural History of African-American Resistance,* seems particularly interested in notions of "self-determination" in relation to integration and black nationalism. Although it is never stated, *Living Our Lives* implies that self-determination is a potential area of agreement for integrationists and black nationalists. The work also traces the evolution of modes in African-American autobiography from race vindication, to race definition (my term), to confession.

The scope of Franklin's project is impressive. The work has ten chapters, beginning with a chapter on the nineteenth-century Episcopalian minister, Alexander Crummell. Franklin follows with chapters on Ida Wells-Barnett and her anti-lynching crusade, James Weldon Johnson and the Harlem Renaissance debates over African-American aesthetics, and Harry Haywood and the relation between the black working class and communism. Franklin returns to African-American artists in a chapter on the "conflicting blueprints for black writing" offered by Richard Wright and Zora Neale Hurston, and then

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continues a pattern of alternating chapters on literary and political figures, proceeding from W. E. B. Du Bois, to James Baldwin, to Malcolm X, to Gwendolyn Brooks and Amiri Baraka in a single chapter, and concluding with Adam Clayton Powell, Jr.

The chapter on Crummell is the most provocative, not for what it says about Crummell himself, but because Franklin identifies him, and not Frederick Douglass, as the "progenitor of the dominant ideological concerns and preoccupations of African-American intellectuals" (15). Franklin downplays Douglass's influence because he views Douglass's "assimilationism" as insignificant in African-American intellectual thought (14). While it is interesting to see a study that does not present Douglass as a central figure in African-American experience, Franklin's dismissal seems hasty and too extreme, especially since many African-American autobiographers, from Langston Hughes to Maya Angelou, refer to Douglass as a seminal figure.

The chapters on Crummell, Wells-Barnett, and Haywood offer a fascinating history of African-American life. The chapters are a blend of biography and cultural history, covering, for example, Crummell's disappointing experience in Liberia, and Wells-Barnett's behind-the-scenes battles with the founders of the NAACP. The Haywood chapter illuminates the Communist Party's helpful role in the struggles of the black working class in the United States. Franklin deftly demonstrates how Harry Haywood's belief that socialism should coincide with black self-determination led to his conflicts with the Communist Party. In all these chapters there is surprisingly little on the significance of autobiography, but Franklin's pacing and material keep these chapters interesting.

The chapter on James Weldon Johnson's *Along This Way* (1933) explores how the debates over literature during the Harlem Renaissance reflected the debates between the integrationism ofJohnson, the black nationalism of Marcus Garvey, and the race vindication of Du Bois. Franklin points out that while Du Bois rejected Garvey's black nationalism, his aesthetics were more similar to Garvey's beliefs that black writing should accent both the dignity and talent of the race than to Johnson's desire that African-Americans contribute their unique perspective towards developing "American" literature, regardless of how they depict African-Americans.

Franklin explores the question of the propaganda value of art in his examinations of Wright, Hurston, Baldwin, Brooks, and Baraka. In fact, the book may have been better organized as two sections, one tracing the aesthetic debates and development of black artists, and the other tracing the ideological battles among black political and intellectual leaders. Franklin spends much of his chapter on Wright and Hurston summarizing the lives of the two writers—perhaps more time could have been spent outlining their ideology and aesthetics.

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He does hit the major points though, arguing that Wright and Hurston could not have been more opposite in their views on African-American culture: Wright viewing it as "pathological," a product of racism; Hurston celebrating it. Interestingly, Franklin suggests that Hurston's work was the "literary fulfillment" of Johnson's artistic principles, and that, although she wrote most often about all-black communities, her work demonstrates an "integrationist" perspective.

Franklin aligns Baldwin with Hurston because of Baldwin's "acceptance of black humanity" (290) and his dislike of protest literature—two standard observations about Baldwin's aesthetics. Franklin does a service to Baldwin scholars by discussing Baldwin's numerous autobiographical writings together, thus offering a complete picture of Baldwin the autobiographer. He breaks from previous critics in emphasizing the continuity in Baldwin's work, rejecting the notion that Baldwin's subject and style shifted dramatically in 1963 when he became more politically active. Instead, Franklin emphasizes that Baldwin's writing throughout was marked by "intimate confessions of personal frailties and emotions" (317), a trait notably scarce in previous African-American autobiography. Franklin's point here is brilliant, for it explains succinctly why Baldwin's writing is a landmark in the African-American literary and intellectual traditions.

In "Gwendolyn Brooks and Amiri Baraka: The Creation of a Black Literary Aesthetic," Franklin outlines the aesthetics of the black arts movement. He quotes and accepts the definitions offered by the poet Larry Neal and critic Addison Gayle, arguing that the movement signalled the first time African-Americans "aimed their works primarily" at a black audience as opposed to a white one (366). Franklin could have spent more time examining the validity of these claims, particularly since the discussion of the artists cited previously—Johnson, Wright, Hurston, and Baldwin—made no mention of a white target audience. Franklin finds the autobiographies of both Brooks and Baraka marked by conversion experiences similar to those in spiritual autobiographies. In the cases of these writers, however, the conversions concern ideology and aesthetics, rather than spirituality, and they led to the creation of the black arts movement.

The chapters on Du Bois and Powell resemble the earlier chapters on political figures, and read very much like biography. They make for interesting reading simply because their subjects are. The chapter on Malcolm X presents an unusual interpretation of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* by focusing on the notion of the resurrection of the dead. Franklin cites several passages in which Malcolm describes himself as being "dead" before he converted to Islam. Malcolm's contribution to African-American intellectual tradition, according to Franklin, is his yoking of the powerful Christian and Muslim concept of

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resurrection to the situation of the "mentally, morally, and spiritually dead" black man in America (335).

For general readers, *Living Our Stories* offers an engrossing account of twelve influential political and literary African-Americans and the cultural history that they helped to shape. Franklin's writing is clear and continually interesting. I enjoyed the book immensely. For scholars, however, there are some questions. The scholarship is solid, but for a work that promises to trace intellectual traditions, *Living Our Stories* occasionally spends too much time simply recounting biographical information that is available elsewhere in more depth. The main arguments are not faulty, but they are understated and underdeveloped. In some chapters, the explanations of autobiography's relevance to ideological positions seem an afterthought, and occasionally the biographical connections to ideology seem cursory. Franklin's proposition that autobiographers recount their life experiences to explain or defend their ideology is not new. The question that he does not answer, and one that seems important in evaluating the ideological conclusions that autobiographies offer, is how representative are the experiences that the autobiographers describe. If one's ideology is the result of unusual or unique experience, how useful or accurate is that ideology when applied to the African-American community? In other words, should individual experience that is not representative be used to forge ideological positions? And if so, how? I suspect that with a little more probing, Franklin could have offered answers to these and other questions in his impressive collection of biographical, autobiographical, and historical materials.

J. D. Scrimgeour

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Reviewed Elsewhere

All publication information listed is derived from the journals monitored. Ideally, each entry includes the title of the work, the author, the place and date of publication, the publisher, the number of pages, and the price; sometimes, however, this information is not available in the journal or differs from that of the publisher.

This issue contains reviews from the *Bulletin Critique du Livre Français, French Review, French Studies, Literary Review, Los Angeles Times Book Review (LATBR), New York Review of Books (NYRB), New York Times Book Review (NYTBR), The New Yorker, Romance Quarterly, Times Literary Supplement (TLS), Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature (Tulsa Studies),* and the *Women's Review of Books.*

Allen, Ivan and Maynard Jackson

Where Peachtree Meets Sweet Auburn: The Saga of Two Families and the Making of Atlanta. Gary M. Pomerantz. New York: A Lisa Drew Book/Scribner's, 1996. 656 pp. $27.50.

This "is a magnificent piece of writing, a beautiful tapestry of prose in which the stories of two of Atlanta's most celebrated families have been woven into the history of the city itself."

Paul Goldberger, *NYTBR*, July 21, 1996: 4.

Arnold, Matthew

A Life of Matthew Arnold. Nicholas Murray. London: Hodder and Stoughton. 400 pp. £20.

Shrimpton notes a "thoroughness in consulting manuscript sources," but this is "not a fresh view of Matthew Arnold."

Nicholas Shrimpton, *TLS*, June 14, 1996: 4.

Auden, W. H. and Chester Kallman

Wystan and Chester: A Personal Memoir of W. H. Auden and Chester Kallman. Thekla Clark. Winchester, MA: Faber and Faber, 1996. 130 pp. $19.95.

Clark's "portraits of both Auden and Kallman are truer, and, in a seemingly offhand manner, as penetrating as any of those by their other memoirist friends. Adding to her non-aptitudes, Mrs. Clark claims to be unmusical, yet she perfectly catches the nuances and intonations of Wystan's and Chester's voices, simply, as their friends would have to attest, by quoting them believably."

Robert Craft, *NYRB*, June 20, 1996: 37.

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Balzac, Honore

Balzac. Robb Graham. London: Picador, 1994. civ + 417 pp. £20.

"Deliberately understated, modestly disavowed, Graham Robb's prodigious undertaking has resulted in a prestigious achievement. We may cavil over details of interpretation and emphasis, but we must admit that *Balzac* is a model biography: thoroughly researched, all-inclusive, and a sheer delight to read."

Gretchen Rouss Besser, *French Review* 69.5 (Apr. 1996): 815-16.

Barnes, Djuna

Djuna: The Lifework of Djuna Barnes. Phillip Herring. London: Viking, 1995. 386 pp. £20.

"Herring . . . is for the most part exemplary in his thoroughness. . . . *Djuna* . . . at its best, produces a group portrait of Djuna Barnes, instead of making her into an isolated emblem of gender or genius."

Lorna Sage, *TLS*, Apr. 19, 1996: 4.

Baudrillard, Jean

Baudrillard Live: Selected Interviews. Ed. Mike Gane. New York: Routledge, Chapman & Hall, 1993. 221 pp. $15.95.

"This arrangement of twenty-one interviews, some for the first time in English, highlights Baudrillard's evolution: his first embracing of modernity as 'rupture' of tradition, his subsequent trust in Foucauldian genealogy, finally his accepting the 'mediatized' persona imposed by these interviews."

James H. Quinlan, *French Review* 69.6 (May 1996): 1031-32.

Bettelheim, Bruno

Bettelheim: A Life and Legacy. Nina Sutton. New York: Basic Books, 1996. 606 pp. $35.00.

"In her excellent book [Sutton] has not only done the usual painstaking work, written it up with the grace that distinguishes the exciting from the boring biography, and well understood the psychoanalytic and the European background; she also has that extra touch of biographer's intuition that enables her to put all the differing views of the man together into one whole, illuminating a single complex personality that she can regard with compassion and, in the long run, with admiration as well. In this, I believe, she will carry most readers along with her by the end of the book."

Rosemary Dinnage, *NYRB*, June 20, 1996: 10.

"By the end of the book, Ms. Sutton shows great sympathy for the complex man whose story she chose to tell. Had this sympathy reached the reader at the beginning, the result might have been better biography and a better reflection on the 'Bettelheim affair.' She might

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even have gone further, adding to the literature on the creativity of depressed and narcissistic people, and giving an assessment of Bruno Bettelheim's achievements. As it is, 'Bettelheim' is a serviceable ground breaking for future biographers."

Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, *NYTBR*, July 14, 1996: 22.

BLACK, VIRGINIA

In the Shadow of Polio: A Personal and Social History. Kathryn Black. New York: Addison-Wesley, 1996. 288 pp. $23.00.

"Like so many others, Virginia Black did not, could not, make herself well. Seeking to reconstruct the memory of a mother and family lost long ago, Kathryn Black has written a haunting story of human hope and human limits."

Martha Fay, *NYTBR*, June 2, 1996: 19.

BLOOM, MARION

In Defense of Marion: The Love of Marion Bloom and H. L. Mencken. Ed. Edward A. Martin. Athens: U of Georgia P, 1996. $65.00.

"'In Defense of Marion' contains Mencken's letters to Bloom; those few letters she copied before sending to Mencken; excerpts from her letters to her sister Estelle, one of Theodore Dreiser's many lovers (and, for a time, one of Mencken's closest confidants); and contemporary excerpts from Mencken's published writings and other relevant documents. There are also notes and commentary by Edward A. Martin, a professor of English at Middlebury College, who has skillfully edited this disparate mass of material into a readable and illuminating chronicle of what was by far the most intense romantic relationship of Mencken's life."

Terry Teachout, *NYTBR*, Aug. 25, 1996: 18.

BUONARROTI, MICHELANGELO

Michelangelo and His World: Sculpture of the Italian Renaissance. Joachim Poeschke. New York: Abrams, 1996. 272 pp. $125.00.

"Mr. Poeschke, an art historian who teaches at the University of Düsseldorf, chronicles the triumph of this medium with a comprehensive set of 399 photographs, 52 of them in color. He includes all of the major sculptural achievements of this period; many are shown in various angles and with specific details enlarged. The final portion of the book describes the artwork, piece by piece. Mr. Poeschke often chides art historians for engaging in overinterpretation; he very sensibly refuses to believe that much of this artwork is meant to convey esoteric messages to a privileged few."

Douglas A. Sylva, *NYTBR*, July 21, 1996: 18.

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BÜSHCLER, ANNA

The Burghermeister's Daughter: Scandal in a Sixteenth-Century German Town. Steven Ozment. New York: St. Martin's, 1996. 227 pp. $23.95.

"The litigious Anna fought endless battles to regain her alienated fortune, leaving behind a legal trail that has enabled Ozment to reconstruct sixteenth-century German society in rare detail—a task he carries with even rarer grace.

The New Yorker, June 3, 1996: 93.

CAROLINE OF BRUNSWICK

The Unruly Queen: The Life of Queen Caroline. Flora Fraser. New York: Knopf, 1996. 560 pp. $35.00.

"This is first-rate biography, a solid, stylish book about a very odd couple—Caroline of Brunswick and the Prince of Wales—whose incompatibility became entangled with public policy during the Regency, when Great Britain fought Napoleon and confronted the dislocations of the Industrial Revolution."

The New Yorker, July 8, 1996: 79.

CÉZENNE, PAUL

Cézanne. François Cachin and Joseph H. Rishel. Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art/Abrams, 1996. 75 pp. $75.00.

"In the introduction to 'Cézanne,' an exhibition currently at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, François Cachin, director of the Musées de France, and Joseph H. Rishel, a curator of European painting at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, make no claims to providing new interpretations of either the artist or the man. Instead they concentrate on the shifts in Cézanne's critical fortunes. The result is a fascinating patchwork of opinions that illustrates not only how Cézanne has been reinvented as the patron saint of each successive movement from Fauvism to Cubism to early abstraction, but how monumentally important he remains."

Andrea Barnet, *NYTBR,* June 23, 1996: 22.

CHARDIN, JEAN-BAPTISTE SIMÉON

Chardin. Marianne Roland Michel. New York: Abrams, 1996. 293 pp. $125.00.

"This monumental, lavishly illustrated and impressively scholarly volume was first published in France in 1994 and reaches us now in an excellent translation by Eithne McCarthy. In her preface, Marianne Roland-Michel acknowledges her debt to the pioneering 'Chardin' of Georges Wildenstein (1933), which assembled the leading documents about the painter, as well as to Pierre Rosenberg's catalogue for the

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great Chardin exhibition of 1979, later expanded in 1983. Her text, indeed, is essentially a filling-out and refinement of their findings."

P. N. Furbank, *NYTBR*, July 14, 1996: 24.

CHAUMETTE CÉLESTINE

Célestine: Voices from a French Village. Gillian Tindall. New York: Holt, 1996. 292 pp. $25.00.

"This amazing affecting book conveys the pathos of a region's history through the lives of its inhabitants."

The New Yorker, July 15, 1996: 79.

CHILDERS, ERSKINE

Erskine Childers. Jim Ring. London: John Murray, 1996. 332 pp. £19.99.

"Childers is a fascinating subject and Jim Ring's biography is an excellent portrayal of the man; sympathetic, yet never unquestionably so; well researched . . . and compellingly written."

T. J. Binyon, *TLS*, May 24, 1996: 32.

CLEMENC, ANNIE

Big Annie of Calumet: A True Story of the Industrial Revolution. Jerry Stanley. New York: Crown, 1996. 104 pp. $18.00.

"Mr. Stanley, who teaches history at California State University, Bakersfield, centers the tough story of the Calumet strike on the 6-foot-2-inch Big Annie, a passionate figure on whom the strikers and a corps of sympathetic newspaper reporters depended for inspiration. . . . Perhaps, understandably, Mr. Stanley tends to ennoble his characters, and some of the story's power is squandered."

Nathan Ward, *NYTBR*, Aug. 25, 1996: 23.

CONDE, MARYSE

Entretiens avec Maryse Conde. Françoise Pfaff. Paris: Editions Karthala, 1993. 208 pp. FF 100.

"This original book is the result of seven conversations between Françoise Pfaff, professor of French literature at Howard University, and Maryse Conde, renowned author of *Segou, La Vie scelerate, Moi, Tituba, Traversee de la Mangrove* and many other works. The conversations took place in 1982, 1991, 1992. They are divided into seven chapters dealing with Conde's biography and literary works, as well as her personality and ideas on the creative process, culture, and politics."

Richard L. Sterling, *French Review* 69.5 (Apr. 1996): 827-28.

COUGHLIN, CHARLES

Radio Priest: Charles Coughlin, the Father of Hate Radio. Donald Warren. New York: Free Press, 1996. 376 pp. $27.50.

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"Donald Warren, a professor of sociology and anthropology at Oakland University in Michigan, spent more than 20 years doing research for this book. He consulted church archives in the Vatican, in Washington and in Detroit, as well as the files of the F.B.I. and the papers of four United States Presidents. The Coughlin files in the archives of the Diocese of Detroit were opened to scholars only in the late 1980's, and 'Radio Priest' is the first biography to make use of this indispensable collection. Clearly this is the most complete picture we now have of the famous priest."

Jack Beatty, *NYTBR*, Aug. 25, 1996: 20.

COWARD, NOËL

Bittersweet: A Biography of Noël Coward. Philip Hoare. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996. 605 pp. $30.00.

"Philip Hoare's careful research and lucid presentation in his 'Noël Coward: A Biography' adds depth to the picture. . . . If Mr. Hoare has a fault as a biographer, it is that he fails to keep a sense of proportion. Rumor and gossip form too large and intrusive a part of the story."

Miranda Seymour, *NYTBR*, Aug. 18, 1996: 7.

CRANMER, THOMAS

Thomas Cranmer: A Life. Diarmaid MacCulloch. New Haven: Yale UP, 1996. 692 pp. £29.95.

In "this new and surely definitive biography of Cranmer . . . MacCullough authorizes himself not upon Cranmer's earlier biographies but upon prime documentation."

Patrick Collinson, *TLS*, May 24, 1996: 3.

CURTIS, LIONEL

From Empire to International Commonwealth: A Biography of Lionel Curtis. Deborah Lavin. Oxford: Clarendon, 1995. 373 pp. $85.00.

"This is an excellent book. . . . Deborah Lavin is conspicuously fair and weighs her subject's strengths and weaknesses with elegant dispassion."

Philip Ziegler, *TLS*, Apr. 26, 1996: 22.

DAUMAL, RENE

Correspondance, II 1929-1932. Ed. H. J. Maxwell. Paris: Gallimard, 1993. 331 pp. FF 180.

Of great interest to specialists of the 20s and 30s and of surrealism, but somewhat of a let down for those familiar with *Lettres a ses amis*, I. The letters are organized in chronological order and the volume contains some unpublished letters and an onomastic index, although it lacks a table of contents and a subject index.

Danielle Raquidel, *French Review* 69.6 (May 1996): 1024-25.

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DAVIES, DAME ELEANOR

Handmaid of the Holy Spirit: Dame Eleanor Davies, Never Soe Mad a Ladie. Esther S. Cope. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1992. 247 pp. $42.50.

"The strength of Cope's biography rests in the fact that she takes Lady Eleanor seriously. Earlier biographical accounts of Lady Eleanor, all published in the 1930s, describe her as mad. . . . *Handmaid of the Holy Spirit* deftly untangles the web of biblical, historical and personal allusion that characterizes Lady Eleanor's tracts and proves to be an invaluable guide for readers of her prophecies."

Kimberly N. Brown, *Tulsa Studies* 14.2 (Fall 1995): 377-81.

DEAN, JAMES

Rebel: The Life and Legend of James Dean. Donald Spoto. New York: HarperCollins, 1996. 384 pp. $25.00.

"'Rebel' restores a balance to the negative portrayals of Dean that have appeared over the years, and it shows that 'he was not wicked or shameful in his short life: he was simply unformed and terribly needy.'"

David Walton, *NYTBR*, Aug. 11, 1996: 17.

DELACROIX, EUGENE

Portrait of Delacroix. Elspeth Davies. Edinburgh: Pentland, 1994. 194 pp. Hb £12.50.

Delacroix: A Life. Timothy Wilson-Smith. London: Constable, 1992. 253 pp. Hb £16.95.

"Elspeth Davies's book is, superficially speaking, a disaster. There are no footnotes, no index, no bibliography, no attributions of sources and quotations. . . . Yet I found myself warming to her lively, impressionistic verbal renderings of Delacroix's paintings, and appreciating the judicious selection made from the journal and correspondence. . . . Wilson-Simth's biography has to be preferred. He provides a full and accurate scholarly apparatus. He offers an apt selection of illustrations. The life is just as well explained, the private affairs and the public histories just as plausible. What is surprising, instructive and sobering, however, is to read the two books together."

Peter Collier, *French Studies* 50.1 (Jan. 1996): 87-88.

DEPARDIEU, GERARD

Depardieu: A Biography. Paul Chutkow. New York: Knopf, 1994. 351 pp. $24.00.

"The documenting of Depardieu's talent by his admiring American Boswell has produced a biography which, while not a piece of great literature, is nevertheless, a well-researched and thoroughly readable

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work, one of interest not only to film buffs but to the general reader as well."

Elizabeth G. Joiner, *French Review* 69.6 (May 1996): 1036-37.

Desalvo, Louise

Vertigo: A Memoir. Louise DeSalvo. New York: Dutton, 1996. 321 pp. $23.00.

" . . . with her first memories . . . the writing . . . is terrific. DeSalvo constructs an inviting, unlikely heaven made up of women and children who have their tenement world to themselves. . . . Sadly, the second half of this memoir is not as riveting as the first . . . a highly subjective narrative of what it's like to grow up American, reject what's expected of you and then make your own fate."

Carolyn See, *LATBR*, Aug. 4, 1996: 4.

Dodge, Mabel

A History of Having a Great Many Times Not Continued to be Friends: The Correspondence Between Mabel Dodge and Gertrude Stein, 1911-1934. Ed. Patricia R. Everett. Albuquerque: U of New Mexico P, 1996. 292 pp. $29.95.

"Patricia Everett's book is a labor of love, made richer by her biographical footnotes and a wonderful section of vintage photos of the main characters. Ms. Everett weaves the letters together with a fascinating narrative that combines pertinent events in both women's lives with comments from Dodge's voluminous autobiographies, Stein's letters to other people, and the other memoirs and letters of other members of her circle. Reading 'A History of Having a Great Many times Not Continued to Be Friends,' one feels, as Stein must have, the attraction of Mabel Dodge, who recognized and embraced each great talent she met and who was, through the force of her own will and energy, the center of a one-person, trans-Atlantic Bloomsbury that lasted until her death in 1962."

Julie Martin, *NYTBR*, June 2, 1996: 29.

Duchin, Peter

A Ghost of a Chance. Peter Duchin and Charles Michener. New York: Random House, 1996. 380 pp. $27.50.

" . . . chock-full of name-dropping—but it's more than a simple-minded celebrity bio. There's a whiff of old-time romance here and a few more scraps of meaty gossip (the juiciest about Pamela Harriman in her more mercenary days). But what you really have is the autobiography of a working musician who has interesting thoughts about his heroes, jazz and popular music and about running the 'orchestra business.'"

Georgia Jones-Davis, *LATBR*, Aug. 4: 4.

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EASTMAN, GEORGE

George Eastman: A Biography. Elizabeth Brayer. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996. 637 pp. $39.95.

"Brayer's is a balanced picture of one of the modern era's seminal industrial figures; she has been able, for the first time, to draw on a wide range of sources, including personal papers and company records."

Leslie Hannah, *TLS*, May 24, 1996: 32.

EINSTEIN, ALBERT

Einstein: A Life. Denis Brian. Chichester: Wiley, 1996. 509 pp. £18.99.

Masters's "weakness as a biographer is that he never once ventures a strong opinion. . . . *Einstein: A Life* is a collection of entertaining snapshots, cleverly arranged, rather than a study of character."

Alexander Masters, *TLS*, July 19, 1996: 30.

ELIOT, GEORGE

The Real Life of Mary Ann Evans: George Eliot, Her Letters and Her Fiction. Rosemarie Bodenheimer. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1994. 320 pp. $32.50.

"Bodenheimer wishes to honor George Eliot's desire to preserve after death the private identity she worked so hard to create and defend in life. Indeed, Bodenheimer offers one of the fuller and more sympathetic accounts of that very aspect of George Eliot's character."

Christine L. Krueger, *Tulsa Studies* 14.2 (Fall 1995): 389-90.

FARRAKHAN, LOUIS

Prophet of Rage: A Life of Louis Farrakhan and His Nation. Arthur J. Magida. New York: Basic Books, 1996. 264 pp. $25.00.

"'Prophet of Rage' is really an extended political profile, a third of which concerns Mr. Farrakhan's relatively recent conflicts with Jews and Jewish organizations. I share the author's criticisms of Mr. Farrakhan's anti-Semitism, but I can't say that I found much that was new in his discussion of it."

John B. Judis, *NYTBR*, Aug. 18, 1996: 24.

FLAUBERT, GUSTAVE

Pour Louis Bouilhet. Ed. and comm. Alan Raitt. Textes litteraires 87. Exeter: U of Exeter P, 1994. liv + 85 pp. Pb £9.95.

"The volume as a whole is meticulously put together, with excellent notes, particularly those which identify minor figures of the period. These texts are, of course, all available elsewhere, but the interest of Raitt's volume is that it gives a clearer picture of the various phases of Flaubert's friendship with Bouilhet."

Timothy Unwin, *French Studies* 50.1 (Jan. 1996): 91-92.

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Ford, Madox Ford

The World Before the War. Vol. 1 of *Ford Madox Ford: A Dual Life.* Max Saunders. New York: Oxford UP, 1996. 632 pp. $55.00.

"Max Saunders, who teaches English at King's College, London, sensibly never tries to nail [Ford] down. . . . This impressive and scholarly volume takes us from Ford's birth (as Ford Hermann Hueffer) in 1873 to his departure for the battlefields of France in 1916."

Martin Stannard, *NYTBR,* June 30, 1996: 34.

Foucault, Michel

The Passion of Michel Foucault. James Miller. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993. 491 pp. $27.50.

"Unlike Didier Eribon's biography, whose main focus is on the philosopher within the context of French intellectual institutions and trends, Miller's *The Passion of Michel Foucault* locates three predominant periods in Foucault's intellectual itinerary and discloses, for the first time, the most intimate details of his convulsive life; Miller's most provocative achievement, however, lies in the deep connections he establishes between the man and his work."

Ernest Sturm, *French Review* 69.5 (Apr. 1996): 829-30.

Galdos, Don Benito

Galdos Politico. Veronica P. Dean-Thacker. Las Palmas de Gran Canaria: Real Sociedad Economica de Amigos del Pais y Circulo Mercantil de Las Palmas, 1992. 238 pp. Ptas. 2000.

El ultimo gran amor de Galdos. Cartas a Teodosia Gandarias desde Santander (1907-1915). Sebastian de la Nuez Caballero. Coleccion Pronillo 11. Santander: Concejalia de Cultura del Excmo. Ayuntamiento de Santander y Ediciones de Libreria Estudio, 1993. 341 pp. Ptas. 3000.

"Dean-Thacker's book is a collection of letters sent from better- and lesser-known Spanish politicians to Don Benito between 1901 and 1914; it also contains a prologue by Alfonso Armas Ayala, an introduction by Dean-Thacker, a useful onomastic index, and a short bibliography, including a section on other collections of letters sent from or to Galdos. . . . Sebastian de la Nuez has published the most extensive collection of letters from Galdos to anyone. Of particular interest are a section entitled 'Galdos en el teatro' and reproductions of original Galdosian letters transcribed by de la Nuez."

Stephen Miller, *Romance Quarterly* 43.2 (Spring 1996): 121-22.

Gibson, Josh

The Power and the Darkness: The Life of Josh Gibson in the Shadows of the Game. Mark Ribowsky. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994. 304 pp. $23.00.

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"Although the book is well-researched and well-written, there is a flatness to 'The Power and the Darkness' that cannot be alleviated by statistics and game synopses. . . . Though Mr. Ribowsky does give us a good sense of how Gibson grew up, first in rural Georgia and then in a rough Pittsburgh neighborhood, we never quite understand what made him tick. Large chunks of his off-field life are either missing or vague. In the end, Gibson is the shadow of this book."

Charles Salzburg, *NYTBR*, June 2, 1996: 20.

GIDE, ANDRE AND CHRISTIAN BECK

Correspondance. Ed. Pierre Masson. Pref. Beatrix Beck. Coll. "Textes litteraires français 444. Paris: Droz, 1994. 296 pp. FF 216.

A pleasurable book, if only because of Christian Beck (the father of novelist Beatrix Beck), that extraordinary character daring enough to write "there is no kind of talent whatsoever in my manuscript. As for genius, no work ever written in French contains more of it. Talent, it is true, is far superior to genius." Why should not Beatrix Beck and Pierre Masson start a reedition of his complete works? They are written in a perfect language.

Bulletin Critique du Livre Français 567 (Dec. 1995): 496-97.

GILBERT, W. S.

W. S. Gilbert: A Classic Victorian and his Theatre. Jane W. Stedman. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1996. 374 pp. £20.

"In its biographical aspects, her W. S. Gilbert shows the kind of exemplary restraint that has almost been forgotten in modern letters."

Judith Weir, *TLS*, Apr. 26, 1996. 22

GOLDWATER, BARRY

Barry Goldwater. Robert Alan Goldberg. New Haven: Yale UP, 1995. 463 pp. $27.50.

"It describes Goldwater's early years and the intricacies of his campaigning in superb detail. . . . Goldberg too easily accepts the mainstream view that Goldwater's views in later life have . . . followed from the individualism he professed in the 1950s and 60s."

David Frum, *TLS*, May 17, 1996: 9.

GORBACHEV, MIKHAIL S.

The Gorbachev Factor. Archie Brown. New York: Oxford UP, 1996. 406 pp. $30.00.

"To understand this singular man, the reader can do no better than to turn to Archie Brown's astute and lucid (if not felicitously titled) book 'The Gorbachev Factor." There have been several excellent works on Mr. Gorbachev, most notably "Why Gorbachev Happened," by Robert

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G. Kaiser, and "Eternal Russia," by Jonathan Steele. But none examines the subject as thoroughly as this volume."

Abraham Brumberg, *NYTBR*, July 7, 1996: 10.

Grossinger, Richard

New Moon. Richard Grossinger. Berkeley: Frog, distributed by North Atlantic Books, 1996. 600 pp. $25.00.

"One can't read Richard Grossinger's 600-page memoir of growing up Jewish and absurd without being of two minds about it. . . . The first 300 pages, in particular, are fascinating. . . . The last 300 fall off a bit."

Michael Harris, *LATBR*, Aug. 4, 1996: 7.

Haber, Fritz

Fritz Haber, Chemiker, Nobelpreistrager, Deutscher, Jude: Eine Biografie. Dietrich Stoltzenberg. New York: VCH. 669 pp. $60.00.

"Stoltzenberg's excellent biography is written with scholarly detachment. He confesses that he found it hard to imagine himself in the mind and role of Haber and to understand his unquestioning nationalism and sense of patriotic duty. Stoltzenberg's documents show that Haber continued to be held in the highest esteem in Germany as a great patriot, scientist, and statesman, despite the widespread disillusionment with World War I; he also captivated people by his liveliness, charm, Old-World courtesy, and quick repartee. By a terrible irony of fate, it was his apparently most beneficent invention, the synthesis of ammonia, which has also harmed the world immeasurably. Without it, Germany would have run out of explosives once its long-planned blitzkrieg against France failed. The war would have come to an early end and millions of young men would not have been slaughtered."

M. F. Perutz, *NYRB*, June 20, 1996: 31.

Hellman, Lillian and Dashiell Hammett

Hellman and Hammet: The Legendary Passion of Lillian Hellman and Dashiell Hammet. Joan Mellon. New York: HarperCollins, 1996. 572 pp. $32.00.

"About the only readers who won't be enraged by Hellman and Hammett are those with no ideological ax to grind. They will put down the book more fascinated than ever by the story of two people who were so much in love for so long—mainly because they might have been the only two people on earth who could have possibly loved each other."

Allen Barra, *LATBR*, July 28, 1996: 3.

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"As a case study in pyschopathology, 'Hellman and Hammet' is engrossing, if repetitious; as a portrait of applied Stalinism, it is frank and forthright. What it fails to do is make a persuasive case that Lillian Hellman still matters. Hammett's place in American literature is secure, though minor: he and Raymond Chandler will always be remembered as the Washington and Lincoln of detective fiction. Not so Hellman."

Terry Teachout, *NYTBR*, June 23, 1996: 34.

IVES, CHARLES

Charles Ives: A Life with Music. Jan Swafford. New York: Norton, 1996. 525 pp. $30.00.

"Though Mr. Swafford is no debunker, he stops well short of the Ives idolatry and ideological camp following that weaken older studies like those of Henry and Sidney Cowell and Wilfrid Mellers. And yet there is never a doubt about which side of the Ivesian divide he stands on. He is one of those informed enthusiasts whose fervor can be contagious."

Donald Henahan, *NYTBR*, Aug. 4, 1996: 11-12.

JACKSON, JESSE

Jesse: The Life and Pilgrimage of Jesse Jackson. Marshal Frady. New York: Random House, 1996. 552 pp. $28.50.

"Mr. Frady is a talented reporter who has made something of a career for himself writing books about the contemporary South, including biographies of George Wallace and Billy Graham. This study shares both the intelligence and the florid, vaguely Faulknerian prose style of his earlier works. But it is more intense and more personal than they were, in part, because Mr. Frady had extensive and intimate access to Mr. Jackson over many years and in part because he obviously admires and likes his subject. Perhaps for that reason, he has managed to reveal something of the inner character of this complicated man and to make clear both how familiar and how unusual a type he is."

Alan Brinkley, *NYTBR*, June 9, 1996: 12-13.

JACKSON, MAYNARD (See ALLEN, IVAN)

KABAKOV, ILYA

Ilya Kabakov: The Man Who Never Threw Anything Away. Amei Wallace. New York: Abrams, 1996. 256 pp. $65.00.

"Wallace describes the key developments in Mr. Kabakov's art, from his goofily naïve works of the 70's to his preoccupation in the 80's with 'total installations.'"

Siri Huntoon, *NYTBR*, Aug. 11, 1996: 17.

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MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE

Lafayette in Two Worlds: Public Cultures and Personal Identities in an Age of Revolutions. Lloyd Kramer. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1996. 354 pp. $39.95.

"As for Kramer's chapter comparing Lafayette with Tocqueville, it reveals the problem besetting his book particularly starkly. The comparison is carried through knowledgeably and sympathetically, but before long one finds oneself wondering why it was ever undertaken. Both men belonged to the French nobility, and both of them visited and were deeply impressed by the United States; but there the likeness seems to end. . . . Kramer's formula is that 'although nobody ever calls Lafayette an intellectual, he actually devoted much of his life after 1800 to the activities that intellectuals pursue,' and this confirms the point rather neatly. . . . Here, as elsewhere, the laudable aim of enlarging our idea of Lafayette and showing him as 'complex' and 'varied' seems to run head-on against brute fact."

P. N. Furbank, *NYRB*, July 11, 1996: 50.

LANCASTER, NANCY

Nancy Lancaster: Her Life, Her World, Her Art. Robert Becker. New York: Knopf, 1996. 416 pp. $40.00.

"Since she specialized in England's castles and stately homes, this biography, liberally spiced with candid passages of memoir, isn't a practical guide for most readers, but its fascinations are innumerable. They include intimate Anglo-American social history (Lancaster, like her aunt, Lady Astor, was born in Virginia), equally intimate views of great art and architecture, and a striking portrait of a perfectionist."

The New Yorker, June 10, 1996: 89.

LEAN, DAVID

The Big Picture. Kevin Brownlaw. London: Richard Cohen, 1996. 809 pp. £25.

This is "the most affectionate biography" of Lean, but it also is unsparing in its depiction of his human flaws: "Brownlaw provides many hints as to what may have missing in Lean himself."

Philip Kemp, *TLS*, June 14, 1996.

LENYA, LOTTE (See "WEILL, KURT")

LEVINAS, EMMANUEL

Emmanuel Levinas. Marie-Anne Lescourret. Paris: Flammarion, 1994. 418 pp + 16 plates. FF 150.

How, and how far, does the life of a philosopher explain his thinking? In the case of Levinas, it is clear that he stands at the junction of four cultures—Russian, Jewish, French, and German—and also, that after

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the assasination of his parents by the Nazis in Lithuania, he pronounced the superiority of ethics over metaphysics, of the Other over the Self, and above all, announced the epiphanous apparition of the Face of the Other, which gives access to Transcendence.

Bulletin Critique du Livre Français 567 (Dec. 1995): 498.

LEWIS, JERRY

King of Comedy: The Life and Art of Jerry Lewis. Shawn Levy. New York: St. Martin's, 1996. 512 pp. $24.95.

"'King of Comedy' is written out of deep immersion in Lewisiana. The book reflects its subject not just in its energy and drive but also in its inelegance and sprawl. Mr. Levy, a film critic for The (Portland) Oregonian, tucks lively discussion of Mr. Lewis's movies into a kind of chronological slog that typifies entertainer biographies. He fills out his big-tent scenario with a discursive, repetitive style that leaves you wanting less as well as more."

Michael Sragow, *NYTBR*, June 9, 1996: 26.

LOWELL, ROBERT

Lost Puritan: A Life of Robert Lowell. Paul Mariani. New York: Norton, 1994. 527 pp. $27.50.

In spite of using an "erratic" and "too arbitrary" style, of not including a bibliography, and of indulging in a certain amount of "psychological second-guessing," Mariani offers a "careful synthesis of correspondence into the narrative. . . . *Lost Puritan* is an important new biography of an important poet, but its many flaws leave one suspecting that the last world on Lowell's life has yet to be written."

Edward M. Cifelli, *Literary Review* 39.3 (1996): 440-41.

MACARTHUR, DOUGLAS

Old Soldiers Never Die: The Life of Douglas MacArthur. Geoffrey Perrett. New York: Random House, 1996. 683 pp. $32.50.

"Well written and resting on substantial independent research, it is nevertheless a retelling of a remarkable story. Mr. Perrett's MacArthur is primarily the creation of his devoted mother, Mary Pinkney (Pinky) Hardy; she lavished affection on her youngest son and maintained a close relationship with him until her death in 1935. Afterward he was sustained by the support of Jean [his second wife]."

Alonzo L. Hamby, *NYTBR*, June 2, 1996: 13-14.

MALLARME, STEPHANE

Mallarme: Correspondance. Lettres sur la poesie. Betrand Marchal, ed. Preface by Yves Bonnefoy. Paris: Gallimard, 1995. 690 pp.

"Bonnefoy's preface, "L'Unique et son interlocuteur," is a masterpiece. . . . Exploring the situation of Mallarme's correspondence at the

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junction of his poetry, his dreams, and his friendships, it unfolds as a fascinating intellectual drama. . . . [The book] contains all Mallarme's known letters from 1862 to 1871, filling 500 pages; plus a choice of letters from 1872 to Mallarme's death in 1898, occupying 120 pages."

Peter Dayan, *French Studies* 50.2 (Apr. 1996): 217-18.

MANET, EDOUARD

Manet's Modernism, Or, The Face of Painting in the 1860s. Michael Fried. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1996. 647 pp. $50.00.

"This stimulating, if exhausting, book must be read against the background of his [Mr. Fried's] studies of 18th-century painting, and of Courbet. It is art history of the highest originality and distinction."

Arthur C. Danto, *NYTBR*, Aug. 4, 1996: 30.

MAXWELL, WILLIAM (See O'CONNOR, FRANK)

MEITNER, LISE

Lise Meitner: A Life in Physics. Ruth Sime. Berkeley: U of California P, 1996. 512 pp. $30.00.

"In Ruth Lewin Sime's hands, the human and social sides of Meitner's life make a good story, and she handles the copious details well."

Brian Papparel, *TLS*, May 9, 1996.

"To be sure, Sime's 'Life in Physics' is more than a biography; it is also a history of nuclear physics in the most critical years of that field. . . . This conscientious, meticulously researched and unceasingly poignant portrayal finally restores Lise Meitner to her rightful place in history."

Evelyn Fox Keller, *Women's Review of Books* 13.12 (Sept. 1996): 5-6.

MELVILLE, HERMAN

Melville: A Biography. Laurie Robertson-Lorant. New York: Clarkson Potter, 1996. 710 pp. $40.00.

"The last word on Melville remains unsaid. The dean of Melville scholars, Hershall Parker has written a biography that promises to be magisterial. Until it appears, we are left with this vivid portrait. The Melville we see here is the one who looks on in horror as another drowns, yet his is the face of a drowning man as well."

David Kirby, *NYTBR*, July 14, 1996: 20.

MENCKEN, H. L. (See BLOOM, MARION)

MITTERRAND, FRANÇOIS

Une Jeunesse française: François Mitterrand, 1934-1942. Pierre Pean. Paris: Fayard, 1994. 616 pp. Pb FF 160.

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Based upon private letters, contemporary publications, individual recollections, and interviews with Mitterrand, Pierre Pean's book is "a challenging exercise in the study of a highly controversial period of French History. . . . [T]he value of this book is that it is a portrait of the sort of dilemmas that faced the people of France in the late 1930s and early 1940s and which were particularly acute for those who were young, as was François Mitterand."

Douglas Johnson, *French Studies* 50.2 (Apr. 1996): 241-42.

MIXNER, DAVID

Stranger Among Friends. David Mixner. New York: Bantam, 1996. 358 pp. $22.95.

"... a figure of political influence, one of the strongest links between gays and straights in the Democratic Party, through a time that was first the most exciting and euphoric in the history of American gays, then its most tragic."

John Balzar, *LATBR*, July 28: 1996: 6.

MONTEZ, LOLA

Lola Montez: A Life. Bruce Seymour. New Haven: Yale UP, 1996. 468 pp. $30.00.

"Even Lola Montez's latest biographer, Bruce Seymour, seems a little more sexually partial than he should be. He admits, in a coy confession in his preface, that his friends now see him as Lola's final victim, 'seduced by charms that transcend time.' But in spite of (or because of) Bruce's obvious emotional involvement with the castanet-clicking, pistol-packing Lola, this is the first biography that benefits from systematic professional research. Seymour, a lawyer and nineteenth-century scholar, has discovered in the King Ludwig I Archive in the Bavarian State Library some of the most fascinating records of European royal intrigue to emerge in recent years."

Fiona MacCarthy, *NYRB*, June 20, 1996: 7.

NIXON, RICHARD M.

Nixon Off The Record: His Candid Commentary on People and Politics. Monica Crowley. New York: Random House, 1996. 231 pp. $23.00.

"It's worthwhile reading, if only for the author's observation on the political similarities between Nixon and the nation's current chief executive. Although Nixon's relations with Clinton had their ups and downs, the ex-president would have taken great satisfaction from Crowley's depiction of Clinton's presidency as 'Nixon's third term.'"

Robert Dakkek, *LATBR*, Aug. 11, 1996: 4.

"Whatever we thought of Nixon, he paid full share for his sins. It's all here, the pain and humiliation of his 20-year exile from the arena. He

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made a fatal mistake not burning those tapes a quarter-century ago. It is inconceivable that he made a second fatal mistake letting it all hang out with Ms. Crowley. Mr. Safire was right: Nixon knew his soul-revealing musing would eventually see the light of day. 'Nixon Off The Record' is a collaboration, not, as some suggest, a betrayal, and that makes the author's naïve whoppers about her subject's confidence all the more charming, even endearing."

Christopher Buckley, *NYTBR*, Aug. 25, 1996: 5-6.

O'Connor, Frank

The Happiness of Getting it Down Right: Letters of Frank O'Connor and William Maxwell, 1945-1966. Ed. Michael Syeinman. New York: Knopf, 1996. 386 pp. $26.00.

"'The Happiness of Getting It Down Right,' the title of a collection of letters between two men, best describes the working methods of O'Connor, who revised endlessly and after his death left 17 versions of one story that *The New Yorker* had eventually rejected. Mr. Maxwell, whose side of the correspondence makes up the bulk of the book, rarely comments on particulars and even more rarely offers anything that could be called criticism of O'Connor's submissions. Devotees of these two writers will treasure this volume for the glimpse it offers of their happy domestic lives, and especially of the blossoming of Mr. Maxwell's own career as a writer of fiction."

David Walton, *NYTBR*, June 30, 1996: 20-21.

Perot, Ross

Citizen Perot: His Life and Times. Gerald Posner. New York: Random House, 1996. 400 pp. $25.00.

"Posner is best remembered for the 1993 reexamination of the Kennedy assasination, *Case Closed*, a book that sought to debunk conspiracy theorists. . . . This new book does not go so strongly against the popular grain but enriches much of the standard and critical thinking about Perot. . . . Just about everything you thought, suspected, heard but forgot, feared or hoped about Perot turns out to be true."

John Balzar, *LATBR*, Aug. 11, 1996: 6.

"The 1992 campaign should have been the end of Ross Perot, but he's back, this time as founder and impresario of his party. It's tragic that the national impulse to found a party of reform should be usurped by this unstoppable man. Read Mr. Posner, who is nothing if not fair to Mr. Perot, and weep.

Jack Beatty, *NYTBR*, Aug. 25, 1996: 10-11.

Presley, Elvis Aaron

The Inner Elvis: A Psychological Biography of Elvis Aaron Presley. Peter Whitmer. New York: Hyperion, 1996. 356 pp. $22.95.

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"Whitmer, a clinical psychologist, uses Presley's early loss [of his twin] to explain what he calls his 'lethal emeshment' with his mother and interprets the rest of his behavior as following from a fixation on Gladys Presley. And most annoyingly, nearly every form of behavior Presley—or any human being—engages in is interpreted to death."

Ann Marlowe, *NYTBR*, Aug. 18, 1996: 21.

PROUST, MARCEL

Marcel Proust. Michel Erman. Paris: Fayard, 1994. 286 pp. FF 120.

A very accessible book, written in a French that is pure and rich. Indispensable to both students and professors who want to gain more familiarity with Proust's work within the context in which it was produced. Ten of the sixteen chapters focus on the period of Proust's life preceding *La Recherche.*

French Review 69.5 (Apr. 1996): 818-19.

ROGERS, WILL

American Original: A Life Of Will Rogers. Ray Robinson. New York: Oxford UP, 1996. 320 pp. $30.00.

"One wishes that Mr. Robinson, whose previous biographical subjects include Lou Gehrig and Christy Mathewson, had dug deeper. Still, Will Rogers has plenty of surface worth writing, and reading, about."

Alan Ross, *TLS*, June 28, 1996: 33.

ROLLINS, ED

Bare Knuckles and Back Rooms: My Life in American Politics. Ed Rollins and Tom DeFrank. New York: Bantam, 1996. 386 pp. $27.50.

"Ed Rollins, a Republican political consultant with a mouth to match his ego, has written the ultimate kiss-and-yell memoir. . . . What elevates this book considerably above the usual political memoir is . . . insight into the mysterious and devious mind of the political manager. This understanding helps explain why our political system has become so mean, and why so many people are turned off by it."

Bill Boyarsky, *LATBR*, Aug. 11, 1996: 3.

SADE, RENÉE-PÉLAGIE DE MONTREUIL DE

Sade's Wife: The Woman Behind the Marquis. Margret Crosland. Chester Springs, PA: Peter Owen/Dufour, 1995. 192 pp. $35.00.

"Unfortunately, Ms. Crosland's portrait reads less like a biography than like a protracted encyclopedia entry. Whatever charismatic appeal Sade must have possessed to compel his wife and so many other women to minimize his violence, goes unaddressed, and the reader seldom gains a sense of Renée-Pélagie Sade as a person. Ultimately, she remains a passive presence in her own biography, a cipher trapped in a dangerous *folie à deux.*"

Lisa Jennifer Selzman, *NYTBR*, July 21, 1996: 18.

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Sayers, Dorothy L.

The Letters of Dorothy L. Sayers, 1899-1937. Ed. Barbara Reynolds. New York: St. Martin's, 1996. 448 pp. $26.95.

"Her acute observations, her sense of humor, and her occasional fits of fierceness make these letters as compelling as anything she published."

The New Yorker, June 3, 1996: 93.

Schliemann, Heinrich

Lost and Found; The 9,000 Treasures of Troy: Heinrich Schliemann and the Gold that Got Away. Caroline Moorehead. New York: Viking, 1996. 307 pp. $24.95.

"Caroline Moorehead has written an engaging biography of Schliemann that is less detailed than David Traill's but perhaps ultimately fairer to its subject. She knows all his faults, but she is alert to hypercritical allegations of error. . . . Ms. Moorehead, whose biography first appeared in England in 1994, can also take account of a recent development in the Schliemann story, the revelation that the Trojan treasures presented to Berlin in 1881 are now in Russia. She has had personal access to two Russian journalists who probed the Moscow state archives after the fall of the Soviet Union in search of the treasures."

Glen Bowerstock, *NYTBR,* July 14, 1996: 7.

Schwartzkopf, Elisabeth

Elisabeth Schwartzkopf. Alan Jefferson. Boston: Northeastern UP, 1996. 304 pp. $29.95.

This 'fascinating new biography of the soprano by the British musicologist, Alan Jefferson, claims to clarify the nature of her Nazi allegiance. The book was published earlier this year in England, where Schwartzkopf was made a dame in 1992, and it caused a stir, which is now only reaching these shores."

Wayne Kostenbaum, *The New Yorker,* Aug. 26 & Sept. 2, 1996: 160-63.

Shaw, George Bernard

Bernard Shaw: The Ascent of Superman. Sally Peters. New Haven: Yale UP, 1996. 328 pp. $28.50.

The emphasis here is on examining Shaw's alleged homosexuality. "Peters has no new or clinching evidence to offer, only a new spin on old evidence."

John Sutherland, *TLS,* May 3, 1996: 26.

". . . Ms. Peters comes forward with an account of the passions in him [Shaw]. And it's simple enough. Shaw was a sexual mess, messed about in the sexually messy scene of late-Victorian Britain. What he did not see about himself, but what the critical toolkit you can pick

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up over any graduate school counter nowadays equips Ms. Peters to spot, is that he was an effeminate, a gender bender, a literary transvestite and a frightened closet Uranium or Urging (elevated terms for 'queer'—the derogatory word made fashionable by the Marquess of Queensberry—current among high-minded end-of-the-century gay men). . . . As a debunking story, [this work] is not without attraction, especially for our gender-skeptical times."

Valentine Cunningham, *NYTBR*, June 2, 1996: 7.

STRAYHORN, BILLY

Lush Life: A Biography of Billy Strayhorn. David Hajdu. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1996. 306 pp. $27.50.

"What makes 'Lush Life' one of the finest jazz biographies is the way Mr. Hajdu directs the readers to these conclusions through the weight of his evidence, without explicitly stating them. The detail Mr. Hajdu has uncovered, particularly concerning the early Pittsburgh years and including the copious testimony of nearly 200 of Strayhorn's and Ellington's associates, is staggering, especially in light of how little had been previously published on Strayhorn."

Will Friedwald. *NYTBR*, July 14, 1996: 8.

STEIN, GERTRUDE and LEO (For Gertrude, see also DODGE, MABEL)

Sister Brother: Gertrude and Leo Stein. Brenda Wineapple. New York: Putnam's, 1996. 514 pp. $35.00.

"In her ambitious biography 'Sister Brother,' Brenda Wineapple tries to strip away the layers of legend that have accumulated around Gertrude Stein, not only to illuminate the sources of her art but to get at the art of her enigmatic relationship with her brother. Yet while the book provides a basis for speculation about the nature of their curious symbiosis, it never satisfactorily answers the questions of why, after 40 years of near-constant companionship, Gertrude was able to expunge Leo so completely from her life."

Andrea Barnet, *NYTBR*, June 2, 1996: 28.

STRAVINSKY, IGOR

Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions: A Biography of the Works Through "Mavra." Richard Taruskin. 2 Vols. Berkeley: U of California P, 1996. 1,757 pp. $175.00.

"This is a staggering achievement. . . . What Stravinsky had led us to forget is what this study lays before us: 'Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions.'"

Paul Griffiths, *NYTBR*, Aug. 4, 1996: 10-11.

TCHAIKOVSKY, PETER

Tchaikovsky: A Biography. Anthony Holden. New York: Random House, 1996. 576 pp. $35.00.

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"This compelling biography recounts the development of Russia's musical institutions in the late nineteenth century, Tchaikovsky's own musical development, and his relations with colleagues, rivals, friends, and relatives, but its central theme is the desperation of living as a closeted homosexual."

The New Yorker, June 17, 1996: 100.

Mother Teresa

The Missionary Position: Mother Teresa in Theory and Practice. Christopher Hitchens. New York: Verso, 1995. 98 pp. $12.98.

" . . . Hitchen's stirrings are so far from blasphemous as almost to resonate with the severities of orthodoxy. He came to scoff, but the murmurings that recurrently rise from his place in the pew unmistakably imply the man who has remained to pray. Mockeries suffuse his tones; but their charms, seduce us though they may, cannot conceal the fierce purpose of their employment, not in God's despite but on His behalf. The compelling impulse in *The Missionary Position*'s heartbeat is not to make fun of a holy woman in her wither but chastise a heretic."

Murray Kempton, *NYRB,* July 11, 1996: 4.

Valles, Jules

Jules Valles. Roger Bellet. Paris: Fayard, 1995. 539 pp. Pb FF 160.

"This probably definitive biography, which probes much deeper than Max Gallo's Stakhanovite effort of 1988, proceeds at a leisurely pace, even though Bellet's style is Tacitean. He sympathetically dogs Valles through every stage of his life. . . . His synthesized study is truly comprehensive and understanding."

Walter Redfern, *French Studies* 50.2 (Apr. 1996): 216-17.

Wagner, Honus

Honus Wagner: A Biography. Dennis DeValeria and Jeanne Burke DeValeria. New York: Holt, 1996. 320 pp. $27.50.

"Regrettably, Wagner's life is almost completely circumscribed by the foul lines, and niceness doesn't make for an exciting story. The result is a well-researched, workmanlike and serviceable book."

George Robinson, *NYTBR,* June 9, 1996: 23.

Weber, Max

Max Weber: The Politics and Spirit of Tragedy. John Patrick Diggins. New York: Basic Books, 1996. 334 pp. $35.00.

"The attentive reader will find most of the main incidents of Weber's life here, and some interesting and perceptive commentary on most of the topics [that concerned Weber]. But the originality of the book lies in the larger purpose. That purpose is an essentially uncomfortable

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one. It is to get readers to take Weber's distaste for the brashness, vulgarity and general foolishness of modern democratic societies as seriously as he, John Patrick Diggins."

Alan Ryan, *NYTBR*, Aug. 4, 1996: 14.

WEILL, KURT

Speak Low (When You Speak Love): The Letters of Kurt Weill and Lotte Lenya. Ed. and trans. Lys Symonette and Kim H. Kowalke. Berkeley: U of California P, 1996. 554 pp. $39.95.

"It is not the most dazzling correspondence you have ever read, but it is enormously entertaining and variously rewarding."

John Simon, *NYTBR*, June 23, 1996: 17-20.

WELLES, ORSON

Rosebud: The Story of Orson Welles. David Thomson. New York: Knopf, 1996. 463 pp. $30.00.

"If there are doubts whether the contradictions that shape Welles' imperious career can support another book after Simon Callow's exemplary 'Road to Xanadu,' . . . Mr. Thomson dispels them easily. 'Rosebud' is no match for Mr. Callow's supreme thoroughness or penetrating insights into acting and directing, but Mr. Thomson prefers bolder strokes: sweeping pronouncements that capture the essence of Welles' life better than they do the facts."

Janet Maslin, *NYTBR*, June 30, 1996: 8.

WHITE, PATRICK

Letters. Ed. David Marr. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1996. 677 pp. $35.00.

"White used to ask his friends to burn his letters, but changed his mind in the end. It's a tribute to David Marr's skills and perseverance that after completing a biography of White, he actually obtained White's permission to edit the letters. He has done well."

Claude Rawson, *NYTBR*, July 21, 196: 10-11.

WIESEL, ELIE

Elie Wiesel: Pelerin de la memoire. Philippe-Michel de Saint Cheron. Paris: Librairie Plon, 1994. 377 pp. FF 145.

Saint Cheron's biography appeared within a few months of Wiesel's autobiography, *Tous les fleuves vont a la mer.* "Saint Cheron truly makes his subject come alive. . . . To date no one has written a more masterful life of Elie Wiesel—except possibly Elie Wiesel himself!"

Jack Kolbert, *French Review* 69.5 (Apr. 1996): 831-32.

WIESENTHAL, SIMON

Simon Wiesenthal: A Life in Search of Justice. Hella Pick. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1996. 349 pp. £20.

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"Hella Pick's fairminded, sensitive and elegantly written account is less a conventional biography than a description of how this extraordinary one-man band . . . interacts with Austrian post-war politicians, intelligence agents, Israel, the Jewish Establishment in America, Communists and past Communists and . . . a vast scattered cast of admirers and detractors."

Michael Burleigh, *TLS*, Aug. 2, 1996: 9.

WILSON, ANGUS

Angus Wilson: A Biography. Margaret Drabble. New York: St. Martin's, 1996. 716 pp. $35.00.

"The first half of Ms. Drabble's biography is absolutely engrossing and her skills as a novelist bring a solidity to the fascinating story of Wilson's background and early career. As the book progresses, however, she suffers the same fate as Wilson when he was researching his life of Kipling, and gets 'bogged down by the weight of the material and of biographical detail.' . . . Ms. Drabble also seems hesitant about introducing herself into the narrative and gets into rather a muddle referring to herself sometimes in the third person, sometimes in the first—sometimes both on the same page. All this could have been sorted out by any competent editor, and such flaws must be set against the book's genuine achievement: it places Angus Wilson in the charivari of the unfolding century and demonstrates how this fine writer was shaped by, and recorded, the society in which he lived."

Peter Parker, *NYTBR*, Aug. 11, 1996: 7.

Collections, Group Biographies, and Works of Interest

BROADCAST JOURNALISTS

The Murrow Boys: Pioneers on the Front Lines of Broadcast Journalism. Stanley Cloud and Lynne Olson. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1996. 448 pp. $27.50.

"'The Murrow Boys' works best when it focuses on the reporters' dispatches and on their role as journalists, but it suffers from a breathless celebrity-magazine style. Too much emphasis is given to speculation about romantic conquests (and in one case, even the sexually transmitted disease that followed). Similarly, the authors—Stanley Cloud, a former Washington Bureau chief for Time magazine, and Lynne Olson, a former reporter who teaches journalism at American University—sometimes indulge in amateur psychoanalysis."

Ruth Bayard Cunningham, *NYTBR*, June 2, 1996: 20.

CARICATURISTS

The Age of Caricature: Satirical Prints in the Reign of George III. Diana Donald. New Haven: Yale UP, 1996. 248 pp. $60.00.

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"When we consider the ephemeral nature of satire, the survival of interest in Georgian caricature seems extraordinary, until we note that what has really survived is not the satire but the draftsmanship of Rowlandson, Gillray, and the Cruikshank brothers. Ms. Donald's scholarship is thorough and her detective work in decoding all those cryptic images misses very little. One could quibble that the book's typography is a bit tight and airless for the large page size, but the superb color and halftone reproductions more than compensate. 'The Age of Caricature' is an indispensable guide to these comic masterpieces, and one that will be hard to improve upon."

Edward Sorel, *NYTBR*, July 7, 1996: 6.

COVER GIRLS

Cover Girls and Super Models, 1945-1965. Jean-Noël Liaut. New York: Marion Botars, 1995. 221 pp. Pb $27.50.

Liau "is at his best when deconstructing the quality of a woman's beauty that made her beloved by the camera, or on the walkway. . . . However, the book suffers from a lack of original research and absence of anything approaching a sense of ironic perspective on fashion or on its subjects. It's one thing to regard great beauty as a miracle, with just a touch of the divine; it's quite another to regard it as talent."

Judith Newman, *NYTBR*, June 2, 1996: 20.

HENRY VIII'S CHILDREN

The Children of Henry VIII. Alison Weir. New York: Ballantine, 1996. 385 pp. $25.00.

"Like anthropology, history and biography can demonstrate unfamiliar ways of feeling and being. Alison Weir's sympathetic biography . . . does just that, reminding us that human nature has changed—and for the better."

Naomi Bliven, *NYTBR*, Aug. 4, 1996: 6.

HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

"When They Came to Take My Father": Voices of the Holocaust. Ed. Leora Kahn and Rachel Hager. New York: Arcade, 1996. 180 pp. $35.00.

"The eloquence of this testimony [by the survivors] is not well served by the book's design: Mark Seliger's photographs are too often blurry, in unflattering close-up and cropped at odd angles; the inconsistently oversized typography distracts from the simple eloquence of the text, which was edited by Leora Kahn, a photography editor, and Rachel Hager, a senior editor at Parents magazine."

Susan Shapiro, *NYTBR*, Aug. 4, 1996: 19.

WRITERS

Fame and Folly: Essays. Cynthia Ozick. New York: Knopf, 1996. 289 pp. $26.00.

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"At the outset of this collection of essays, the distinguished critic and short-fiction writer Cynthia Ozick defines her subject as the point where writers' lives—often narratives of chaos—often intersect with the art of their work; she will examine, she says, the 'famous literary figures in our famously rotten century who have been associated with one sort of folly or another.' A promising theme, but it has little or no connection with what follows: a typically disparate group of literary essays that vary widely in quality. 'Isaac Babel and the Identity Question' is valuable and thought-provoking in its examination of Babel's work and his fascinating and dramatic life. 'Seymour: Homage to a Bibliophile' is a charming remembrance of Ms. Ozick's friend Seymour Adelman, a passionate book collector. But in other essays Ms. Ozick's many original insights are marred by farfetched and sometimes dubious assertions."

Brooke Allen. *NYTBR*, June 9, 1996: 32.

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Lifelines

Social Historians Write Biography. NEH Summer Seminar at the Newberry Library, June 9-August 1, 1997, directed by James Grossman and Elliott Gorn. For further information contact James Grossman, Newberry Library, 60 West Walton Street, Chicago, IL 60610; (312) 255-3524; email: g726@midway.uchicago.edu. Deadline: 1 March 1997.

Call for Papers. The *Journal of Aging and Identity* seeks contributions from social science and humanities scholars. *JAI* examines the phenomenon of aging as it is presented in the humanities, popular culture, and the arts. Please address all submissions to Lagretta Lenker; Coeditor, *Journal of Aging and Identity;* University of South Florida, MGZ 144; 4202 E. Fowler Avenue; Tampa, FL 33620. For further information, contact JAI@conted.usf.edu.

Call for Papers. Lives, Stories, Narratives: an interdisciplinary conference on writing biography, life course, and personal narrative. History Department, Monash University. July 18–20, 1997. For further information, contact Barbara Caine, Esther Faye, Mark Peel, or John Rickard; History Department; Monash University; Melbourne, Australia; email: mark.peel@arts.monash.edu.au.

Call for Papers. Voices, Narratives, Identities: Women's History Network 6th Annual Conference. September 13–14, 1997. University of Sussex. Send offers of papers by March 21, 1997, to Gerry Holloway or Pat Owen; Education Development Building; University of Sussex; Falmer, Brighton BN1 9RG, England (please mark your envelope "WHN").

Call for Papers. The Family Demography Network, Social Science History Association, is seeking suggestions for panels and participants for the family/demography sessions to be held at the SSHA meeting in Washington, D.C. October 15–18, 1997. For further information, contact Charles Wetherell, Network Representative, at merlin@citrus.ucr.edu.

Biography from (A)ubrey to (B)oswell, OR, Biography before Boswell. Theory, writers, and subjects of biography in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. A panel coordinated by Sara Burroughs at the South Central Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies Conference, Edmond, Oklahoma, Feburary 27-March 2, 1997. For further information, contact Sara Burroughs: Department of Language and Communication, Northwestern State University, Natchitoches, LA 71497; email: burroughs@alpha.nsula.edu.

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Women's Lives/Texts and Archival Literacy. Exploring the special challenges of archival collections for researchers of women's lives and works. A member-organized session at the Association of Canadian College and University Teachers of English Conference. St. John's, Newfoundland. May 1997. For further information, contact Helen M. Buss; Department of English; University of Calgary; Calgary, Alberta T2N 1N4, Canada; or Kathryn Harvey; Department of English; University of Alberta; Edmonton, Alberta, T6G 2E5, Canada.

Approaches to Autobiography in Comics. Popular Culture Association Conference. San Antonio, Texas, March 26-29, 1997. For further information, contact Charles Hatfield; Department of English; University of Connecticut; Box U-25; Storrs, CT 06269; (860) 429-7565; email: cwh93001@uconnvm.uconn.edu.

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Issued Quarterly

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Published by the University of Hawai'i Press for the Biographical Research Center.
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ISSN 0162–4962

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1984

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Deafness and Deftness in CODA Autobiography: Ruth Sidransky's *In Silence* and Lou Ann Walker's *A Loss For Words*

Timothy Dow Adams

For Terry Galloway

A writer's biography is in his twists of language.
—Joseph Brodsky

In "Signs of Life: Deafness and Personal Narrative," G. Thomas Couser begins by explaining that deaf autobiography is "an unlikely and rare entity, if not a contradiction in terms" (1). Although autobiographies have been written by authors with severe hearing loss, including David Wright's *Deafness: An Autobiography*, Henry Kisor's *What's That Pig Outdoors?*, Frances Warfield's *Keep Listening*, and Hannah Merker's *Listening*, plus Helen Keller's classic story of deafness and blindness, *The Story of My Life*, none of these books would qualify as Deaf autobiography because they were written in English rather than in American Sign Language (ASL). This problem is partially solved in the recent *"Deaf Maggie Lee Sayre": Photographs of a River Life*, an autobiography told mainly through the author's family photographs, though Sayre's handwritten captions are in English. Because ASL is not a written language, autobiography in ASL is virtually impossible at this time. The only completely "authentic" Deaf autobiography in existence is *Lessons in Laughter*, the autobiography of Deaf actor Bernard Bragg, which was signed to a Deaf professor at Gallaudet, Eugene Bergman, and published by Gallaudet University Press.

Although no satisfactory terms can cope with the complicated current political situation for deaf people, throughout this essay I will follow the widely accepted convention of using the lowercase deaf when referring to physical conditions

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involving hearing, and the uppercase Deaf when referring to those who share American Sign Language, and a specific culture, regardless of their ability to hear. The single most important characteristic that identifies a person's orientation toward Deafness is fluency in ASL. Ruth Sidransky, for instance, describes a hearing relative whose signs are awkward—"he never used his voice, and his signs were made without facial expression"—as "undeaf" (29).

Beginning with the publication of William C. Stokoe's *Sign Language Structure* in 1960, and reaching widespread publicity first during the "Deaf President Now" resistance at Gallaudet University in 1988, and later through a similar protest at Lexington School in New York in 1994, the Deaf civil rights movement distinguishes those who live in the Deaf community and communicate primarily in ASL from those who make their lives mainly in the world at large. This distinction is crucial, for as Couser explains, "for various reasons, 'hard of hearing' people tend to be interested in assistive devices and corrective procedures, whereas 'Deaf' people are more interested in modifying the environment to accommodate them—providing closed captions for TV, signers for speakers, and so on" (105). These agendas have provoked intense political debate. For instance, despite a life marked daily by hearing and speaking problems, Heather Whitestone, Miss America for 1995, is not a member of the Deaf world and has often been repudiated for her attempts at "passing," becoming through her public exposure the deaf equivalent of an Uncle Tom in the eyes of some members of the Deaf community.

Anyone trying to fit deaf autobiography into one of the established subgenres of life writing must guard against the valorizing tendencies of a system which suggests that Deafness is a culture and deafness a pathology, a division which reduces many people whose hearing is less acute than most of mainstream America to a secondary position, "not really Deaf," unless they are lucky enough to have been born to Deaf parents or are willing to leave their families behind. A more productive strategy for classifying deaf autobiography should begin with Couser's persuasive parallels between the autobiographies of the deaf and those by Native Americans, an especially interesting idea when we realize that in the Hollywood version of Native American culture, oral communication is reduced to a few syllables, while more sophisticated ideas must be communicated by sign language or smoke signals. We might begin to

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understand deaf autobiographies by thinking of them in terms of Arnold Krupat's two groups: "Indian autobiography and autobiography by Indians" (179–80). Indian autobiographies are stories told to another person from another culture, as exemplified by a text such as *Black Elk Speaks*, while autobiographies by Indians are life stories written in English by someone of Native American heritage who has moved into a bicultural world—for example, *A Son of the Forest* by William Apes.

By this analogy then, virtually all deaf autobiographies would be parallel to autobiography by Indians. However, a unique autobiographical situation exists in the Deaf world, a situation that combines the categories "autobiographies by Indians" and "Indian autobiographies": namely, the autobiographies of hearing children of Deaf parents. This essay will explore this combination through a look at two autobiographies written by hearing daughters of deaf parents. In both Lou Ann Walker's *A Loss for Words: The Story of Deafness in a Family* (1986), and Ruth Sidransky's *In Silence: Growing Up Hearing in a Deaf World* (1990), the central autobiographical problem is maintaining and constructing a sense of self while describing in written English—a second language for each author—a childhood in which American Sign Language was the first language.

American Sign Language is a rich and complex way of communicating, a manual language capable of gracefully rendering the most specific of details and the most abstract of thoughts. Neither a pantomime language nor a representation of English, ASL instead is a complete language of its own, with distinct grammar, syntax, structure, morphological features, slang, curses, puns, jokes, slips-of-the-hand, poetry (sometimes called art sign), and even regional accents. Because ASL descends directly from French Sign Language, American signers would be more at home communicating with a Deaf person in Paris than in London. ASL should not be confused with other forms of signed English such as cued speech, in which hand gestures distinguish between various letters, or SEE (Seeing Exact English or Seeing Essential English), commonly seen when an interpreter appears in an oval on our television screens during a spoken speech.

Because ASL does not follow English syntax, often no exact or even satisfactory translation from ASL to English is possible, especially because ASL is not a written language, though as Oliver Sacks observes, SignFont, or some other version of written sign, may eventually transform ASL from an oral to an

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oral and written language (78–9). Numerous attempts have been made to render signs through drawings with arrows, multiple-exposure photography, videotapes, and a complicated method of recording similar to the Labanotation system used to record dancers. Knowing the dancer from the dance is, however, especially difficult in any system designed to record the individual parts of a sign, which include beginning hand shapes, physical location on the body, spatial orientation, hand movements, speed, and iconicity.

In the Deaf world, the community of people for whom American Sign Language is the first or primary language regardless of audiological abilities, Lou Ann Walker and Ruth Sidransky would be classified by the acronym CODA, Children of Deaf Adults, a name which suggests a musical section bringing a theme to a close, thus paralleling the bicultural, bilingual situation of hearing children of deaf families. Though neither author has any physical problem with her hearing, *A Loss for Words* and *In Silence* might be labeled Deaf autobiography, as opposed to the equally valuable perspective provided by David Wright and Henry Kisor, autobiographers who are non-signing, non-members of the Deaf community, but whose abilities to hear are profoundly impaired.

In his memoir *Words for a Deaf Daughter* and in *Gala, A Fictional Sequel*, Paul West describes being thrust suddenly into the role of father to a deaf child. Though growing up hearing in the Deaf world placed Walker and Sidransky in the opposite situation, nevertheless their position in that world proves to be more ambiguous. As Carol Padden and Tom Humphries note, "Hearing children of Deaf parents represent an ongoing contradiction in the culture: they display the knowledge of their parents—skill in the language and social conduct—but the culture finds subtle ways to give them an unusual and separate status" (3). Although both autobiographers are native signers, each set of parents made an attempt at speaking English to their children in a homemade version of "total communication," a combination of sign and speech. Ruth Sidransky's first memory is of her mother simultaneously signing "baby," while "crooning the words with her voice, aloud, high-pitched and musical, to me" (3). Although Lou Ann Walker's parents used ASL when talking to each other, at first they deliberately slowed down their signs for their child, reverting to the far more clumsy combination of fingerspelling and "throaty whispers" (53).

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For Lou Ann Walker, the translation problem is compounded by her desire to reproduce in English her prelingually deaf parents' spoken speech. Her own name, for instance, is pronounced by her parents "looeen," while her sisters' names, Kay Sue and Jan Lee, which were "chosen for ease of pronunciation, turned into unearthly 'Kehzoo' and 'Zhanli'" (18). Ruth Sidransky has similar problems with her private and public name. As a young child she was not biologically mute, but like Maxine Hong Kingston or Maya Angelou, was unable or unwilling to speak—in her case because of the difficulty she had in understanding English as spoken by the hearing world. Her first name, for example, which is pronounced "Rooth" or "Roothie" in one world is "Rathee" to her family: "'Rathee' is pronounced like the word 'rather' with a double 'ee' rising at the end. It was my mother's call. My own name, my private identity, deaf said" (40).

Both Walker's and Sidransky's experiences with their names call into question what Philippe Lejeune describes in "The Autobiographical Pact" as one of the essential characteristics of autobiography as a genre: "autobiography . . . supposes that there is identity of name between the author . . . the narrator of the story, and the character who is being talked about" (12). Instead, Sidransky's "deaf said" name confers a private identity in conflict with her public identity in the hearing world. Hearing "Ruth" pronounced orally in school thus becomes a literal example of Christa Wolf's figurative statement: "Sooner or later everybody hears his own name as though for the first time" (21). Furthermore, both Walker's and Sidransky's experiences confirm Julia Watson's claim about autobiographers in general: "it is the subject's hearing of her or his own name that marks an entry into autobiographical consciousness, destabilizes the automatic name-self link, and makes it an occasion for subjectification" (98).

The importance of names and naming in the world of the CODA is further demonstrated through Sidransky's description of a complicated naming game she played with her father. Seeing a stranger on the street, she would invent a name and then sign it "into her father's eyes." He would then invent a sign to correspond with the name. For instance, "a meticulously dressed man, blond, clutching a brief case, rushing to the subway," whom she names Alexander, her father then would immediately render in ASL (though here translated back into

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written English): "he closed his eyes, lifted his head, and with delicacy, thumb and forefinger pinched together in the shape of the signed letter *a*, picked imaginary lint from his jacket lapel two times" (252).

If the issue of naming raises such complex considerations, the issue of cultural mediation and identity is if anything more complex. At first Sidransky and Walker seem to be performing an autobiographical act in ways that parallel a number of recent immigrant autobiographies, such as Eva Hoffman's *Lost in Translation*. According to William Boelhower, "immigrant autobiography must organize two cultural systems, a culture of the present and the future and a culture of memory, into a single model" (29), a process certainly analogous to Walker's experience when composing her own autobiography: "Writing it, I sat at my desk, endlessly typing the same pages over and over. It was as if, in the writing, the words had to come through my fingers for me to understand them, just as the meaning had to come through my fingers in signing" (3). But as Sau-Ling Cynthia Wong points out in an essay that rebuts Boelhower's models for immigrant autobiography, by failing to make a distinction between those born in this country and those of an earlier generation who were not, Boelhower has confused immigrant and ethnic autobiography. "Prior to constructing a taxonomy of cultural responses from the context of immigrant autobiographies," Wong continues, "the critic would do well to reckon with another important response capable of functioning as an epistemological and ideological filter: choice of language" (152).

This issue of language is obviously crucial for both Sidransky and Walker. Each daughter acts as a liaison for her family, translating both language and culture from world to world. But choice of language, always problematic, has an extra dimension for the hearing children of deaf parents. Not only do CODAs have to contend with the fact that translation from ASL to English involves a completely different syntax, as well as a completely different medium—hands for tongues—which makes even the word bilingual inaccurate as a translation for bimanual, CODAs must also cope with the fact that they are biologically isolated from the Deaf community. Walker and Sidransky are not like immigrants, because they were born into their situation, but neither are they exactly members of the Deaf

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world, both because they have no trouble with hearing, and because their childhoods are partially spent in standard schools among hearing people. Paul Preston, the hearing son of deaf parents and author of a study of CODAs, writes that a large part of an inevitable sense of alienation comes from the experience of "diglossia," which François Grosjean defines as "a situation in which two languages . . . have very precise and distinct functions, so the bilingual speaker has little leeway in deciding which to use" (qtd. in Preston 131). Given the nature of this diglossia, Wong's insistence on the distinction between immigrant and ethnic autobiography might prove useful for dealing with CODA autobiography as well.

Despite the fact that only about thirty percent of deafness is genetic, the Deaf community sometimes conducts itself as an ethnic category, sharing despite different racial backgrounds a common language and culture, and an absolute conviction that Deafness is not a disability. While people of any racial background can find a home within the Deaf world, for the strictest interpreters of Deaf culture, there is always a question of genetic heritage at the heart of one's position, as signified by the commonly used term "Deaf of Deaf"—that is, a Deaf child of Deaf parents, which certifies a more authentic Deaf identity. The more radical Deaf activists then are in a position something like the Quebeçois. Since they are self-identified by a minority language surrounded by a majority language, they are unable to tolerate bilingualism. Hearing children of deaf parents, however, like deaf children of hearing parents, occupy a complex personal and political situation, the equivalent of a child of one race born—not adopted—to another. Ironically, then, CODA autobiographies are less like "autobiographies by Indians" and more like Indian captivity narratives, except of course for the fact that the authors were not "captured," but born "in captivity."

Perhaps, then, comparing CODA autobiographies to Native American, immigrant, or ethnic autobiographies is less productive than considering them as a form of what Françoise Lionnet terms *métissage*, in her book *Autobiographical Voices*—a title especially appropriate in the cases of Lou Ann Walker and Ruth Sidransky precisely because voice is what makes CODAs different from their family community. In her study of Francophone writers, Lionnet identifies *métissage* as a mechanism for those who "must survive (and write) in the

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interval between different cultures and languages" (3). This mechanism is a creole combination of the natural informal spoken language of home and the formal written language of the dominant culture. For CODAs like Walker and Sidransky, the situation is further complicated by the fact that their home language is neither oral nor written. Derrida's opposition between *écriture* and *parole* takes on a new meaning when applied to those without a written language, especially in the case of these hearing children of deaf parents, who constitute an odd majority within a minority, growing up where neither spoken nor written language prevails.

Negotiating these and other complications makes hearing children of deaf parents prime candidates for adopting Lionnet's creole language strategy. So intricate is their situation that many CODAs, unable to fit cleanly into either the Hearing or Deaf worlds, are most at home in what Paul Preston calls "coda-talk . . . a highly creative combination of ASL and spoken English that is both voiced and signed" (222). As Preston explains, "Coda-talk is more like a glossed and often literal version of ASL than a translation of ASL. For example, a person using coda-talk might simultaneously sign and say, 'Feel fork in throat.' Ordinarily, the same ASL sentence would be translated into English as 'I'm feeling stuck'" (259).

The title of Preston's book, *Mother Father Deaf*, is itself an example of coda-talk:

> Mother father deaf is the verbatim English equivalent of three signs which, depending on context and accompanying facial expressions, can be variously translated such as—"My mother and father are deaf" or "Are her mother and father deaf?" Yet the English phrase "mother father deaf" is often recognizable even among those who use American Sign Language. Because of the diverse possible language orientations of deaf people and their hearing children, this signed identifier is often accompanied by mouthed or spoken words. Thus, this hybrid expression can be understood by those who exclusively use ASL as well as those who use only spoken English. (249)

Because of the daily complications of family communication, CODAS often learn to move not just between ASL and English, but also, depending on their audience, between spoken and written English, voiced and unvoiced lipreading, and home-

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signs, filling in the difficult words with fingerspelling, a system in which a word is spelled out with the hands. Finally, whether their parents are pre- or post-lingually deaf, many CODAs also understand their parents' spoken utterances as well.

CODAs do not practice *métissage* by privileging the oral tradition over the written, but by simultaneously using both oral and manual means of communication. Because neither Sidransky nor Walker can produce her autobiography in coda-talk, each must resort to standard written English, though each attempts to suggest, through such devices as spelling, neologisms, and poetic description, the nature of ASL. For instance, one of Walker's attempts to reproduce in written English her parents' oral speech includes the word "judicious," which her mother speaks as "Zhoodikeyous," and the author retranslates as "Joo-dish-as" (101). Her mother's letters are rendered in a prose that sounds like an e. e. cummings poem: "We are pink tickled. . . . Brian is so fine young man" (206). Or in Ruth Sidransky's mother's words: "The sky is weak. It wets rain" (262).

Often Walker simultaneously describes a sign and translates it, as in the following: "She grinned, signing an 'm' that mounted to an arc and glided into a 'c,' her fingers rounded: 'Merry Christmas,' a sign that conjured up a holly wreath with red berries tied in a velvet bow in my mind" (98). Part of the strength of *A Loss for Words* lies in Walker's presentation of a wide variety of translation problems, ranging from the differences between sign and fingerspelling, to a discussion about teaching Harpo, the ironically named family dog, to sign. Particularly interesting are the many instances in which sign and gesture merge, as when she teaches her father to dip while dancing, and the instances describing the complications of reading signs in reverse, as when she describes her parents' version of a cello concert: "watching bows fly" (91).

Just as Eva Hoffman, caught between two languages, writes in her autobiography *Lost in Translation* of the satisfaction in speaking invented Polish words—"Bramaramaszermery, rotumotu pulimuli"—which she describes as "articulation that says the whole world at once" (11), so Ruth Sidransky attempts to bridge the signing and the speaking worlds with invented words. "I called crunched paper 'gribble balls.' Mashed potatoes were 'shalamus potatoes,' a washcloth was a 'wepp,'" (46), she writes, echoing earlier scenes when she unconsciously used an

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invented vocabulary, as when she requested "one lib domadoes" at the grocery store for her mother, pronouncing the abbreviation for pound (38). Had she wanted to, Sidransky could easily have translated even her nonsense English into ASL, as Eric Malzkuhn's translation of Lewis Carroll's "Jabberwocky" illustrates.

> Just as Carroll formed words from parts of other words—'slithe,' for example, from 'slimy' and 'lithe'—Malzkuhn recombined parts of ordinary signs. For the JubJub bird he first took parts of signs used for long, thin objects and combined them into one hand-shape, which he placed on top of the head, to characterize the bird's plumage. Next he recombined the parts of the sign WING to suggest an outlandish creature with double wings on each side of the body. (Padden and Humphries 85)

Especially complex are those scenes in which Sidransky, acting as both interpreter and lawyer for her mother, simultaneously signs a judge's words to her family and translates orally her family's words to the court, or the poignant scenes in which—acting out Derrida's *The Ear of the Other*—her family insists on taping her ears to her head. Here Sidransky is doubly embarrassed by the terrible irony of her school nickname, Dumbo, which for the school children referred to the Disney elephant, but which for Sidransky also always invoked the cruel name her father Benny is called at work.

Eudora Welty's autobiography of her own development as a writer, *One Writer's Beginnings*, is organized into three sections: "Listening," "Learning to See," and "Finding a Voice." Lou Ann Walker's very similar three-part structure—"Watching," "Listening," and "Learning"—frequently blends together, in a manner paralleling her own acquisition of ASL. Thus, "Watching" is often about sound, "Listening" about telepathy and seeing clearly, and "Learning" about discovering how to construct a personal voice, one that works for writing, speaking, and signing, to whatever audience is ready to pay attention.

A similar blending, though across senses instead of cultures, is important as well to Ruth Sidransky's *In Silence*. Her mother, for example, wonders, after feeling the radio to see if it has been left on, if sound is warm. On another occasion, part of a "hand-to-hand conversation," her mother asks Ruth if "the

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yellow tulip had a sound of its own" (9). Such nonverbal forms of métissage—the bleeding of one sense into another, the constant movement back and forth in time—are also attempts to translate the deaf way of telling stories, which parallels both the syntax of ASL and the traditional way of structuring a story. As Walker explains, "Many sign language 'sentences' begin with a time element and then proceed with what happened, thereby conjugating the verbs" (47). As a result, there is no punch line to a story; instead, "the fluidity of the sign is what the person enjoys watching," and "the actual telling of the anecdote, not the point it makes, not the final note" is what is most significant (143).

Lou Ann Walker's most complicated translation problems revolve around her lack of privacy as the constant translator for her parents, and as an adult, of the signs of others. H-Dirksen Bauman's study of situations where signs must necessarily be translated to word is compelling in its warnings about the signer's loss of privacy and identity. "In the transfer from sign to voice, from autobiography to first-person biography," he writes, "a host of discursive dangers arise that potentially modify the signer's 'I.' The result is often an indistinguishable amalgam of mixed identities in which the interpreter's own autobiographical significations merge into the spoken narrative" (51). Sometimes, however, the reverse can occur, as when hearing persons have to speak of personal matters to hearing telephone operators in deaf relay systems, or as detailed in Walker's case, when the interpreter has a loss of privacy. Working in "courtrooms, jail cells, hospital emergency rooms, welfare offices, mental institutions, and college classrooms" (151), and rigorously relying on the sign language interpreter Code of Ethics, which requires that she neither add to nor subtract from the exact details and tone of the language she translates, Walker eventually is caught in a situation that parallels her greatest fear: "The more you get to know me, the less there is to know. I was a black void" (181). Required to interpret for a young deaf woman in a psychiatric ward, who in a break from reality begins calmly to claim that she is the Virgin Mary, Walker experiences a break from reality herself:

> "Oh, and why do you think you are the Virgin Mary?" But this time the psychiatrist was addressing me. I pointed to Miss Thomas as I signed—reminding him who the patient was....

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> And suddenly I wanted to scream. For the first time in my life, I wanted to cry out. This isn't me. It's her! I have talked and listened and heard and there is no me! I have heard and hidden the insults so long, I have been the conduit so long that I am disappearing!
>
> As I marched down the street from the hospital, my left hand was clenched. My right hand was restless. I found myself finger-spelling, swiftly, angrily: "I am not the Virgin Mary. I am not the Virgin Mary." (180-81)

And yet, while moments like these recur throughout Walker's narrative, she nevertheless manages to constitute a sense of identity out of the very processes of mediation and translation which makes her situation so complex. Sidransky's personal narrative follows a similar path, moving from a time when she passed for deaf, through a period in which she questioned her parents' internal language processes—"Were their thoughts ideographs? Did they see hands in their mind's eye?" (258)—to a time when she herself dreamed in sign, and finally to the state of mind necessary to write the following description of her father's signing at Grand Central Station, the passage which comes closest to "translating the syntax and structure of sign language into English," as her book jacket puts it: "'People out, train is out, gone from station.' He played with his arms and hands; his arms chugged along the train track going nowhere, his nostrils snorted imaginary steam rising from the locomotive pulling life's passengers to their destination" (12). Nor does the translation end here, for embedded within her father's signing is the metaphorical phrase "Train Go Sorry," the title of Leah Hager Cohen's recent memoir about growing up hearing in the Deaf community. (Her hearing father was superintendent of the Lexington School.) "Train go sorry," Cohen explains, refers to missed connections: "Sometimes people gloss the expression as train gone sorry or train go zoom; in any case, it is the ASL equivalent of 'you missed the boat'" (188).

Françoise Lionnet celebrates *métissage* as a strategy for giving voice to the silenced, the art of "listening for the 'noise,'" that is usually filtered out by the official language's tendency to refine (22–3). Part of the strength of *A Loss for Words* and *In Silence* arises from the way both autobiographies reverse that situation, providing not voice for the silenced but a silencing of speech in favor of the words of the body, the art of looking

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rather than listening for noise. *A Loss for Words* is therefore an ironic title. Instead of a childhood in which words were lost, Walker actually grew up shuttling between the Deaf and Hearing worlds, communicating in all the variety of words I have been describing, often using combinations of ASL and fingerspelling at home, translating elaborately sculpted ASL sentences into English. Compared to written English, ASL represents not a loss of words but a language in which words are almost at a loss, replaced by larger units, a language in which words are literally inscribed on and with the body, allowing for a high degree of freedom and improvisation.

In Silence is an ironic title as well, for as both Sidransky and Walker explain, neither the Deaf nor the Hearing worlds are really silent. Not only is ASL accompanied by the noise of moving hands, clicking teeth, and lips, and the sounds of signers unaware they are making sounds, but as a hearing child of deaf parents, Sidransky lives among the noise of the deaf. Noting her difficulties in translating from Polish to English and back, particularly when acting as an intermediary for her parents, Eva Hoffman observes: "In order to translate a language or a text, without changing its meaning, one would have to transport its audience as well" (273). People translated into the world of the deaf would find themselves in a world of sound, for as Padden and Humphries explain, "the lives of Deaf people are far from silent but very loudly click, buzz, swish, pop, roar, and whir" (109). In introducing the hearing "audience" for their parents' signs, Walker and Sidransky both indicate clearly that the Deaf world is hardly a silent world:

> I could hear the squeak of the furnace, the blower over the stove my mother had forgotten to turn off, the high-pitched electronic squeal of two table lamps, the overly loud, slightly irregular ticking of their kitchen clock. . . . It sometimes felt as if we were living in some kind of amusement park, lights flashing on and off the way they do around a carousel. Whenever the doorbell rang, a light in our central hall and another in the kitchen flashed on, and a loud buzzer went off for me and my sisters. (Walker 17)

Sidransky invokes similar paradoxes when in reference to the term "profoundly deaf," she notes that being deaf can indeed be profound, and then proposes "stone deaf" as a better term, because "stones may be mute, but they are warm in the sun,

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they feel soothing in the palm" (151). In this playful treatment of the common expression "stone deaf," Sidransky not only invokes the titles of two other autobiographies, Annie Dillard's *Teaching a Stone to Talk* and Daphne Marlatt's "How Hug a Stone," but also enacts the two-way interaction between words, symbols, and communication at the heart of both *A Loss for Words* and *In Silence*, that natural improvisation that speakers of ASL bring to English, the rich heritage of a lifetime of literally feeling words.

The groundbreaking work on Deaf autobiography by Couser and Bauman should alert us to another dimension to the world of autobiography, one that provides another warning about being too restrictive in defining autobiography as "self life writing." Rather, considering the life writing of those hearing people whose lives are intertwined with the Deaf world should make us more sensitive to what Bauman describes as the "enunciatory gap between the signer's 'I' and the autobiographical 'I'" (51). CODA autobiographies not only show us that the distance can be bridged from both directions, but also that another culture lives within the gap.

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The Will of Katherine Maynwaring: An Autobiographical Reading

Joanne Lafler

When Katherine Maynwaring, a widow in her middle fifties, made her will in December 1764, she had—as Jane Austen might have said—a considerable fortune at her disposal. To her daughter and only child, Margaret Maynwaring, who was charged with executing numerous small bequests, she left "all I shall dye possessed of whether real or personal Estate" (100v),[1] including a house on Bruton Street in Mayfair, land in County Cork, Ireland, and some £6000 in stocks and bonds. In many respects hers is typical of the wills of eighteenth-century women: the large number of charitable and personal bequests, the detailed descriptions of clothing and personal effects, the emphasis upon household and servants, and the favoritism shown to certain legatees.[2] But Katherine Maynwaring did not die in 1764. She lived another sixteen years, and instead of remaking her will as the circumstances of her life changed, she added fourteen codicils. The result is a narrative, skeletal but nevertheless revealing, of the last years of her life.

Social historians have mined the material contained in wills for a variety of purposes, and literary theorists have argued for the importance of "non-traditional" genres such as letters and journals for the study of women's autobiography, but I am aware of no studies of wills as autobiographical texts.[3] Yet for most women, regardless of social class, wills would be their only "letter to the world"; as such, they can be read as examples of female self-representation. My interest in wills as a distinctive kind of autobiographical document—intended for the public record yet dealing in private and even intimate matters—came about through my research into the life of the actress Anne Oldfield, whose son married Katherine Maynwaring. I was unable to find a single piece of Anne Oldfield's own writing.

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But there was her will. Far shorter, less complex, and certainly less revealing than Katherine Maynwaring's, it is written in the first person, however hedged about by the circumstance of a painful terminal illness and the conventions of legal language. I read this will as the actress's assessment of her place in the world and her personal relationships—a brief self-portrait of a prudent and devoted mother, a dutiful (if not especially loving) daughter, and above all a woman of substance. Much of the will is of course devoted to the disposition of her property: a house on Grosvenor Street in Mayfair and unspecified investments amounting to more than £5000. This was property that she had, for the most part, acquired from her own earnings and that, as the will suggests, she had managed carefully.[4]

What Anne Oldfield omits from her will is as significant as what she includes. Unlike many stage personalities of the period, she never refers to her theatrical colleagues.[5] The only individuals named—aside from the two sons, her mother, her aunt, and a companion—are her three executors, all wealthy and prominent men.[6] Her self-characterization is not as "actress," but as the upper-class woman she frequently portrayed on the stage. Indeed, if we had no information about the woman except from her will, there would be no way of knowing that she had achieved her position in life by practicing a disreputable profession. In *Testamentary Acts: Browning, Tennyson, James, Hardy,* Michael Millgate discusses the strategies employed by famous and successful writers, in their wills, to control their reputations and the reception of their work after their death.[7] For Anne Oldfield, the matter of controlling reputation was more difficult. Dying at the age of forty-seven, when she was still active on the stage, she could not disguise the fact of her professional life; but in her will she could at least ignore it.

As a prominent figure, Anne Oldfield would be certain that the terms of her will would be made public. But all wills became part of the public record. Their potential readers extended beyond the legatees and those charged with executing the provisions. Feelings about family members, friends, and household servants, revelations about illicit relationships, information about possessions and debts, were therefore not intended for limited circulation, as in the case of unpublished letters and journals, but were available to posterity.[8] Women's wills made their relationships and their values visible in an age in which

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married women had no legal existence and women in general were effaced from public life.

The value of Katherine Maynwaring's will for me originally was tangential; the information it contained about her daughter's death tied up one more thread in the story of Anne Oldfield. But I soon became absorbed in the document itself, realizing that in its language I was hearing the authentic voice of a woman who had died more than two hundred years ago:[9] a woman whose heart had been broken by the death of her only child; who kept the letters of the husband to whom she had been married for less than two years; who cared about what would happen to a dog, two cats, two coach horses—and to her elderly household servants—after her death; who worried about returning things she had borrowed and kept close track of the value of her investments; and who, over the years, became increasingly remote, if not necessarily estranged, from the surviving members of her family. These familiar and touching details exerted an unexpectedly powerful hold on my imagination. I was attracted also by the subtext of anxiety, the fear—although she never mentions ill health—that she might be carried away suddenly, before she had a chance to settle her affairs properly. A note of uncertainty is sounded in the opening sentences of the will: "It is my desire whenever it shall please the Divine Providence to take me out of this Mortal State my Body may be interred as private and with as Little Expence as possible / that five pounds be given to the poor of the parish where it shall so happen. . . ."

Whether or not Katherine Maynwaring intended to leave a deeply engaging account of her character and relationships, she did so. In this essay it is my desire to flesh out the self-portrait that she sketches in her will and to discuss the ways in which the will became for her, as well as for its later readers, an autobiographical record.

* * * * *

Katherine Maynwaring was born to a life of comfort and privilege, if not to title or great wealth. On her father's side she was descended from Anglo-Irish gentry. Protestant Pynes had lived in County Cork, Ireland since the end of the sixteenth century. Various Henry and Nicholas Pynes appear throughout the seventeenth century, in such legal documents as the Acts of Settlement and Explanation.[10] Sir Richard Pyne, her paternal

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grandfather, was a Lord Chief Justice of Ireland and the purchaser of estates forfeited by Irish Catholics during the so-called Williamite confiscations of 1688–1703.[11] Her maternal grandfather was Sir Richard Edgcumbe, a landed gentleman of Devonshire whose son Richard was created Baron Edgcumbe in 1742.

Katherine's parents, Henry Pyne and Margaret Edgcumbe, were married at St. Mary le Bow, in London, on June 23, 1705.[12] Katherine was born no later than 1709, for Sir Richard Pyne's will, made in October of that year, refers to provisions for the marriage settlements of his two granddaughters, Anne and Katherine. Anne, who is mentioned first, was presumably Katherine's older sister.[13] In 1730, Anne married Henry Cavendish, who was created baronet in 1755.[14] Their seven surviving children—two sons and five daughters—figure prominently in Katherine Maynwaring's will.

On June 23, 1739, the anniversary of her parents' marriage, Katherine Pyne married Arthur Maynwaring at the church of St. Benet's, Paul's Wharf.[15] She was at least thirty and prepared to take the adventurous step of marrying the illegitimate son of an actress. Perhaps the fact that Arthur Maynwaring's mother, Anne Oldfield, had died nearly nine years earlier at least partially mitigated the element of scandal; and, as Lawrence Stone points out, illegitimacy was publicly acknowledged and generally tolerated during the eighteenth century among the aristocracy and the middle classes.[16] Katherine Pyne's husband was the acknowledged son of the Whig propagandist Arthur Maynwaring. Young Arthur Maynwaring entered the military, and he seems to have enjoyed the social status of his father, the descendant of a landed but impecunious Shropshire family, rather than his famous and wealthy, but certainly déclassé mother.

Although there is every reason to believe that Katherine Pyne's marriage was based on affection, it was also an eighteenth-century upper-class marriage: property and money were involved. She had perhaps already inherited, or received by deed, property in Ireland which, as she notes in codicil 9, yielded "upwards of Seven hundred [pounds] a Year returned to England when all the Tenants pay"—a significant income.[17] She may also have brought a cash settlement to the marriage, for her grandfather's will had ordered the sale of lands in the

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parish of Walton, Surrey, to raise marriage portions for his two granddaughters.[18] Arthur Maynwaring possessed no land; but in 1739, at the age of thirty, he had finally come into possession of a £5000 legacy from his mother, of which he had previously enjoyed only the income (Lafler 166).

In April of 1741 Arthur Maynwaring, having been promoted from captain to major in an infantry regiment, was killed at the siege of Cartagena. I have found no record of the date of Margaret Maynwaring's birth, which could have occurred as early as the latter part of 1739, if Katherine had been pregnant at the time of her marriage, or as late as the latter part of 1741, if she had been pregnant when her husband died. Katherine named her daughter after her own mother, which bespeaks a strong filial bond. Sometime before 1748 Katherine's sister Anne died, for Sir Henry Cavendish remarried at that time.[19]

Such are the bare outlines of Katherine Maynwaring's life until 1764, when she wrote her will. Though she does not refer to her health or to a sense of impending death, the usual reasons for making a will, she decided to put her affairs in order, and in so doing she embarked upon an account of her material, social, and personal life. The resulting document testifies to her relationships with family members, friends, business people, household servants, other dependents, and villagers (nearly forty named individuals), her concern for animals, and her feelings about her property and personal belongings.

Her love for Margaret—referred to many times as "My Dear Daughter"—is a powerful theme. To that must be added great confidence and trust. In 1764 Margaret Maynwaring was in her early twenties, yet with one exception, her inheritance was to be "intirely in her own disposal"—a phrase repeated twice.[20] The execution of the will was to be trusted "to my Dear Daughters Honour and Integrity," without assistance from an older male relative or friend. As Amy Erickson has noted, it was not uncommon for female testators to name a daughter as executor, but it was probably not common for so young a woman to be sole executor, given the large amount of money and property and the complexity of Katherine Maynwaring's financial affairs.[21] The will expresses Katherine's desire for Margaret's future happiness—"I hope she will marry suitable to her Rank fortune and education"—but includes no restrictions on her choice of a husband, desiring only that she

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shall consult her maternal relative, Lord Edgcumbe, and Edward Bacon, of Bruton Street, in the matter of a marriage settlement.[22] Altogether, the relatively few instructions suggest to me that Katherine trusted her daughter to discharge her duties faithfully, and, perhaps even more important, to know and to respect Katherine's feelings about financial obligations, family, the household, and personal possessions.

It is painful for a parent to outlive a child, and even more painful if there is no one else in whom to repose great trust as well as affection. On July 18, 1767, probably not long after Margaret's death, Katherine added the first codicil to her will. "Having the misfortune to loose my Dear Daughter," she writes, "I am obliged to appoint Executors in consequence of that Mellancholy and for ever to be lamented event." From that time on, no single person would be entrusted to carry out her will; she appointed her eldest nephew, Henry Cavendish, as principal executor, with the assistance of her neighbor, Edward Bacon. Since neither man could be expected to know her feelings about a variety of matters, both financial and personal, the will's fourteen codicils deal in the minutiae that is absent from the original document of 1764.

If no one could take Margaret's place, Katherine does seem to have been especially attached to her two younger nieces, Frances and Pyne. Of the seven Cavendish children, only the eldest son Henry and these two young sisters were mentioned by name in the original 1764 will, and Frances and Pyne were given cash legacies at that time: "one hundred pounds each to be paid . . . within one year after my Decease." After the will was signed and dated, Katherine added a postscript instructing Margaret to "convey my gowns and peticoates viz: Gold and Silver ones to my nieces Frances and Pyne Cavendish together with all my new Blond [lace] and lace unwashed as likewise my point Suit to be divided between them as they shall think proper with the advice of Sir Henry Cavendish Bart their father."

The disposition of clothing and other personal effects is often a key to a testator's relationship with family members and friends. Frances and Pyne are the only Cavendish children to receive their aunt's and cousin's personal possessions. After Margaret's death, the six younger Cavendish children were all given sizable cash legacies as well as annuities, but the first codicil also specifies that in addition Frances was to receive

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"my Diamond Ear Rings and the Gold Watch her Dear Cousin uset to wear," and Pyne was to have "my own watch which is a Dunne repeater" and "my pearl Necklace and a Small Diamond Ring with whatever Rings or Trinkets may be found among my own or Daughters Effects."[23] Frances and Pyne were perhaps coevals as well as close companions of Margaret. The watch and jewelry were tangible evidence of their link with her. Unlike their cousin, Frances and Pyne grew older, married, and led lives that seem to have drawn them away from their aunt. In codicil 12 (1775), Katherine left "Mrs Flood" (Frances) and "Mrs Crosbie" (Pyne) £50 apiece "in the Stead of some wearing apparel I had left them in my former will." The clothing was now left to Katherine's long-time personal maid, Hester Bartlett (formerly Wallis). Bequests of clothing to servants were a long-standing tradition among the upper classes (Hecht 116)—Katherine's father and grandfather both left their personal servants clothing and small cash bequests. But this is a different situation. In codicil 3, Katherine had left "to my Servant that is with me at my Death all my wearing apparel *except what is specified in a paper dated Decr ye 24 1764 to be Sent to [the] Miss Cavendish's*" (emphasis added). The gowns and petticoats in question were evidently quite special, and their eventual transfer from Frances and Pyne to Hester Bartlett suggests a change, in degree if not in kind, in her feelings toward her nieces.

Although Katherine made specific bequests to her two younger nieces, she was careful to provide for all of her near relatives, and to manage the affairs of other members of the Pyne family. In the will of 1764 Katherine made arrangements for the disposition of the Irish estate in the event that Margaret died unmarried.[24] These provisions assured that the land in Ireland would benefit all of the immediate Pyne family descendants. Out of this estate, the six younger children of Anne Pyne Cavendish were to receive annuities of £100. Two other relations, the children of a Mrs. Cossart, were to be paid £500 out of the Irish estate when they came of age. If either died, that share was to go to the survivor.[25] The remainder of the Irish estate was to go to the eldest Cavendish son, Henry: "the Interest to himself for life and the Estate to be equally divided between his younger children after his decease." After Margaret's death, Katherine confirmed in codicil 1 the original disposition of the Irish estate, including the legacies to the

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children of Mrs. Cossart, and she disposed of her personal estate. Each of her five nieces was to receive £1000, and her younger nephew £600. (The names of the three older nieces appear for the first time: Lady Bradstreet, Mrs. Burrows, and Mrs. Quin, and she identifies her younger nephew as Major William Cavendish.) Her nearest relations were therefore well provided for.

Over the years other Pyne relatives are mentioned briefly. They are not legatees, and their place in the family is not clear—poor relations, perhaps?—but they clearly come within the orbit of Katherine's financial responsibility. In codicil 2, she directs a payment to "Samuel Dixon . . . what he Demands for Mr John Pynes payment of arrears &c as yet unfinished"; in codicil 4, she leaves "the Sum of twenty pounds to Mr Strafford Pyne to be paid to Samuel Smith Esquire at the old Jewry London"; and in codicil 13 she leaves £7 to "Samuel Dixon Esquire for transacting Mr Waltham Pyne's affairs." All of these are exigent matters; as long as Katherine was there to do so, she would take care of them herself. But we can sense her underlying anxiety. What if she were suddenly carried away? Would her nephew know about these obligations? Although we learn little about John, Strafford, and Waltham Pyne and their relationship to Katherine, their appearance in her will shows us a woman intent upon fulfilling, and perhaps a trifle beset by, her family obligations.

In contrast to the fourteen family members (not counting Margaret) mentioned in the will and codicils,[26] only five individuals can be identified as friends—in the sense of social equals. "Ed[ward] Bacon Esquire of Bruton Street," mentioned with Lord Edgcumbe as a matrimonial advisor in 1764, is named as assistant executor in 1767. In addition to a "Diamond Ring which will be found among my Effects containing one Single Stone," this trusted advisor and his wife were each given bequests of £100. In the first codicil, Katherine also left bequests of £100 apiece to "Mrs Margaret and Mrs Martha Boudishe of Great Marlborough Street," neighbors in Mayfair and the only friends beside the Bacons to receive bequests. A portrait of Margaret Maynwaring was also involved in Katherine's bequest to Martha. In codicil 1 Katherine had directed that this portrait, "done by Hudson," was to be kept by Henry Cavendish and his heirs. But in codicil 4 she amended this, directing that the portrait be given to Martha Boudishe "for her life but no

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further," after which it was to revert to the Cavendishes. Martha had asked for Margaret's portrait, so she and Margaret must have been particular friends.

Another friend, Lady Cashelough, turns up in a rather delightful connection. She was to be paid "what her Ladyship Estimates [the value of] the Diamond Star lost by Hester Wallis [later Bartlett]." Like the various payments involving John, Strafford, and Waltham Pyne, the reimbursement of Lady Cashelough for a servant's carelessness was evidently a matter that Katherine fretted about, lest she die before it was settled.

Katherine Maynwaring's social network—or at least that part of it that appears in the will—also includes a class of people who are neither household servants nor social equals, but objects of charitable concern. I have not been able to identify "Hayne Wolvert" and "Charles Jennings," the first persons named in the will of 1764, who were to receive twenty shillings each. But because the next sentence begins "the same Sum to the poor family opposite the post House at Theale," Wolvert and Jennings are probably connected with this Berkshire village to which Katherine was especially attached. Were they part of a household she had established there? Possibly, but they may simply have been residents whose names she happened to remember, unlike the unnamed poor family across from the post house, and five more families in the "poor Cottages the other side of the Mile Stone at Theale," who were to receive ten shillings each.

Katherine also left small bequests to residents of the neighboring village, Englefield. A dog called Crack was to be allowed "Sixpence a week during his life," and if Margaret could not ensure that this maintenance fell "in such hands as she can rely upon for strict Justice," then she was to take the dog into her own household. Codicil 1 directs the dog's weekly remittance to a "Miss Drake of Englefield"—the "Miss" suggesting she was not a poor villager but something closer to a social equal—and two years later, in 1769, "Miss Anne Drake" was left a bequest of £50, with no mention of Crack, who may since have died.[27] The first codicil also adds to the "small Donation at Englefield . . . twenty Shillings to Draper the late Clark and the like Sum to John Fuller the Gardener."

I have not been able to discover why these villages and their residents were so important to Katherine Maynwaring. The

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opening sentence of the will includes the traditional donation of £5 to the poor of "the parish where it [her death] shall so happen." This might turn out to be the parish of her Mayfair residence—St. George's, Hanover Square—or any number of places where she lived temporarily. Codicils signed at ten different locations in England—including Epsom, Margate, Maidstone, Bath, and Aldsworth—testify to a peripatetic existence and suggest that she may have travelled for her health. There is no reference to any property in Englefield, but she was certainly living there in 1764, for codicil 1 refers to "my former will made in Englefield" that year. Like other affluent residents of London, she may have leased country houses from time to time—for example, the house in Aldsworth, Sussex, where she was living when she wrote the last codicil in 1779. Over the years she resided in many places, but only the villagers of Englefield and Theale were remembered specifically in her will; their bequests were never altered or expunged.

The will does not reveal extensive business relationships, but it does show us a woman who kept a close watch on her various obligations. The names of Thursby Dixon and Samuel Dixon pop up several times in connection with financial transactions. In codicil 13 they are identified as "the two Mr Dixons in Norfolk Street London." There and elsewhere Thursby Dixon was to be paid for buying or selling her East India stock, while Samuel Dixon acted several times as an agent in other business affairs, including the aforementioned Pyne family business. In codicil 2 Katherine frets over a bill of twelve shillings for coal, owed to "Mr Luke Griffiths Heirs." She does not know where the heirs live, but instructs her executor as to how he might find their executors. Debts must be paid, and items that do not belong to her must be returned, including "some large Sheels [shells?] in the Glass case belonging to Mrs Anne Norris that lived with me to be returned or paid for" (codicil 2); "two Ivory fans consisting of nothing but Sticks painted to be returned to Mrs Morrison they being her property" (codicil 3); and "a fine Leather fan to be returned to Lady Bradstreet being hers and Mrs Cossar[t]s Gift to Miss Maynwaring" (codicil 3).

Most of the other individuals named in the will are household servants. Aside from Hester Wallis Bartlett, the most prominent legatee is the woman always referred to as "Mrs Isabella Capel Morrison" or "Mrs Morrison." Although her

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position is never clearly defined, the amounts of her bequests are consistent with those left to another longtime servant. In the will of 1764, she is given an annuity of £15, "and the same Sum yearly to John Buck my present coachman." In the first codicil, Mrs. Morrison receives £16 and the coachman £20. John Buck eventually dies, but Mrs. Morrison continues to be mentioned. Over the years, her annuity is increased to twenty guineas, and codicil 13 (1776) grants her £50 in addition to her annuity. Nor is money the only consideration: in codicil 12, Mrs. Morrison and two elderly under-servants are recommended to the executor's "particular care." Perhaps she was a servant of the Pyne family during Katherine's youth who remained with Katherine after her marriage and had in her old age attained the status of a companion.[28]

There is no indication of how many servants Katherine had altogether. Several times she refers in omnibus fashion to "the servants that are with me." J. Jean Hecht indicates that a total of seven or eight servants would have been appropriate for the London establishment of a woman of Katherine Maynwaring's means.[29] A number of them served her for many years and are identified by name. In addition to John Buck the coachman and Hester Wallis Bartlett, there is Elizabeth Jefferson (possibly Margaret's personal maid), the cook Amy Hutt, Robert (for whose unremembered last name a blank space was left), the washerwoman, Mrs. Williams, and a Mrs. Clarke "who assists the washing at home and many other occasions in the House" (codicil 7). The latter two were twice recommended as "great objects of Charity be[in]g allmost past Service with age and infirmities" (codicils 7 and 9). Katherine Maynwaring was clearly concerned about the fate of longtime servants who could no longer earn their keep.[30]

John Buck (who had died by 1772) and Mrs. Morrison were the only servants given annuities; the rest received cash bequests, which increased over the years. In 1764 the servants "that are with me at the time of my death" were to receive £7 apiece. The first codicil raised the amount to £10 apiece, and in codicil 9 she changed the wording slightly, stating that her servants were to receive a year's wages and an additional £10 apiece "for Mourning." In a postscript she added that for those whose annual wages were less than £10, "that Sum [was] to be made up to them."[31]

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Hester Bartlett's special relationship with her mistress is indicated throughout the codicils. Appearing first in codicil 1 as Hester Wallis, she is given the unusually large legacy of £40 and "one Shilling per week to be paid for the maintenance of the Cat called Sam while it lives and to go with her wherever her habitation is." In codicil 3 she and Elizabeth Jefferson both receive £10 from the disposition of Margaret Maynwaring's effects, as Margaret herself had directed. By codicil 9 she has become Hester Bartlett and is to be paid a shilling a week for the care of "My Cat called Grey . . . during its life," and in codicil 12 she is named as the recipient of the gowns and petticoats formerly bequeathed to Frances and Pyne. Codicil 14, signed on October 26, 1779, concerns only Hester Bartlett, who is to receive "the Sum of twenty pounds besides what I have left her in my former wills." In the deposition of August 1780 Hester Bartlett identifies herself as a widow, but I have discovered nothing about the man she married—most likely another servant—or when he died.

In addition to making bequests for the maintenance of the dog, Crack, at Englefield, and the cats Sam and Gray, Katherine Maynwaring was also concerned about her coach horses, enjoining her executor to look after them, "that they may not be ill used but kept at a Moderate Expense and if possible under the inspection of the Coachman John Buck" (codicil 1). Ever the careful householder, she adds that one of the horses is "almost past Serving and will not cost much," while the other "may be of use some time." Her concern for the well-being of domestic animals is not unique for a woman of her position in the later eighteenth century.[32] But Katherine must have suspected that not everyone would share her humane regard for animals. Margaret, who needed few instructions about much more weighty matters, was directed to find someone truly reliable to look after the dog, or else to take him into her own home (an injunction repeated to Miss Drake in the first codicil). The maintenance given to Hester Bartlett for the care of the cats involved her continuing personal care of them. And Katherine clearly felt that her own coachman could best be relied upon to prevent the horses from being neglected or abused. Like the superannuated washerwomen, the horses could not really earn their keep but were still to be valued for the years of faithful service.

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Places and things—as opposed to people and animals—do not occupy a central place in Katherine Maynwaring's will, but we get some sense of her feelings about her property in Ireland and the house in Mayfair. The only information she provides about her Irish property is the income it yields; if it has a name, she never mentions it. Her father clearly felt a connection to Ireland, referring in his will to his "ancestral burial place" in Mogeely, County Cork, and leaving legacies to Irish relatives and to residents of Kilkenny and Cork, but Katherine reveals no such attachments. I suspect that she never visited her Irish estate. Certainly she shows no awareness of the lives of her tenants, in contrast to the villagers of Theale whose cottages she locates so precisely. She says little about the house in Bruton Street, her principal residence; indeed, had she not outlived her daughter, there would have been no reason to mention the house or its furnishings. If Margaret had inherited her mother's estate, she would probably have continued to live in Bruton Street. If she had moved to another house after her marriage, she would have taken some of the furnishings with her. But Katherine's heir Henry Cavendish had his own house on Stanhope Street in Mayfair. Anticipating that he would not keep the Bruton Street house, Katherine left detailed instructions for its disposition. The possibility that strangers would tramp through the building and examine its contents must have been unpleasant to contemplate. She directed that the furnishings were not to be auctioned in the house itself—a common practice of the period—but "carried out and Sold at some other place" if the buyer of the house did not want them. In addition to Margaret's portrait, codicil 1 identifies a few items that were not to be sold but kept in the family: "the Glass case with every thing in it" and "all the worked chairs and Screen upon a white Ground." (The chairs and screen were probably Margaret's and Katherine's own work.) In codicil 4, Katherine also identifies an "India Cabinet" in the drawing room that was not to be sold but kept by the executor—and "all letters therein to be burnt."

Her instructions about the destruction of personal letters provide a glimpse of her habits both of keeping things and of ordering her life. In codicil 1 she directs that all letters that have no bearing on the business of the will and the inheritance are to be burned without being examined: "[the] Miss Cavendishes [Frances and Pyne] Hester Wallis and others thusly wrote upon

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answered in their respective years and dates." All of Major Maynwaring's letters were to be burned without being read, likewise "all my Dear Daughters as Directed to her." (The cabinet itself—the repository of the letters—is to be kept in the family, while the letters, which have significance only for herself and Margaret, are to be destroyed.) I imagine the letters arranged in neat bundles by correspondent and perhaps in chronological order, for easy reference. The business of writing "answered" on letters was not unique to Katherine Maynwaring. I have seen this on other letters of the period, including the Duchess of Marlborough's. It is the practice of an active and well-organized correspondent.

The will shows other evidence of a careful and businesslike woman. Although she relied upon lawyers and brokers, and presumably had an estate manager in Ireland, Katherine Maynwaring kept abreast of her financial affairs. In codicil 1 she itemizes her investments: "Three thousand eight hundred pounds in the four per Cent and two thousand eight hundred pounds in the three per Cent behind the Bank." Over the years she would sell some of her stock and buy and sell some East India Company bonds. In the lengthy codicil 9 of 1773 she reviewed the value of her estate to assure her nephew that there would be sufficient funds to cover his obligations. The annuities for his sisters and brother presented no problem, for the income from the Irish estate, upon which they were charged, could be counted upon to cover them. But she notes that some of her stocks had been sold in the previous winter and that the remainder—£4000 "in the four per Cents"—was not enough to cover the £1000 cash bequests to the five Cavendish sisters and the smaller bequest to the younger brother.[33] Nevertheless, there would still be enough to cover the various legacies if the value of the Bruton Street house and its furnishings were included. Punctuality was also an important issue. In codicil 1 she had directed that the £1000 legacies to Henry's siblings be made "in easy payments as Suits his Convenience," but in codicil 9 she adds that "the Sooner they are discharged the more conformable to my will," and she reminds Henry that the smaller legacies to friends and servants, along with outstanding debts, are to be paid promptly.

In 1775 (codicil 12) she is still concerned that her investments will not cover the bequests to the Cavendish children, but she

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remembers (or discovers) ten "India Bonds" worth £100 each, not mentioned in her will so far. This would nicely cover the legacies to the six younger Cavendish children, with enough left over for additional small bequests to the younger brother and to Frances and Pyne. Although her anxieties seemed to be allayed, she continued to monitor her financial affairs closely. In codicil 13 (1776), Thursby Dixon is to be paid three pounds "for Selling out the India Stock and putting it in to the three and four per Cents." At this time Katherine feels sufficiently confident about her cash reserves to leave Mrs. Morrison £50 in addition to her annuity. This supplemental bequest is characteristic of Katherine Maynwaring's amendments to her will. Over the years she invariably increased the size of the bequests for her servants and several family members, and she never exercised the power of a wealthy testator to punish or reward potential legatees, or to control them by setting limitations on the terms of the bequests. No one was ever eliminated from her will except by dying or leaving her employ.[34]

The amendments to the will reflect her assessment of her financial condition, but they also offer clues about changing relationships. By 1769 there appears to be a growing fondness for Henry. Codicils 6 and 9 begin "Dear Nephew," giving these portions of her will the intimate tone of personal letters. But there are also indications that the lives of her nieces and nephews interested her less as they, and she, grew older. Indeed, there is an element of pathos in the amount of attention devoted to servants, rather than family, toward the end of Katherine Maynwaring's life. Everything connected with Margaret had long since been settled; there are no references to Margaret after codicil 4, signed on January 23, 1768. Very few events involving the Cavendish nieces and nephews are recorded in the later codicils. In 1773 Henry Cavendish's father-in-law died, leaving Henry's younger children well provided for. Making note of that, Katherine decided that she had no further financial obligations to the next generation of Pyne descendants; accordingly in codicil 9 she altered her will, giving Henry full power over the disposition of the Irish estate, provided of course that the annuities were paid to his sisters and brother. After 1767, Frances and Pyne no longer seem to occupy a premier place in Katherine's thoughts. Not only does she substitute

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money for gowns and petticoats in codicil 12, but the monetary bequests—£50 each—are less than the £100 given their brother William. Their marriages are merely alluded to in the changes of their names. There is a sense that Katherine's personal world was shrinking, becoming confined to her immediate household and small circle of friends. Between October 1776 and the time of her death she lost interest in her will almost completely, altering it only to give an additional legacy to Hester Bartlett, in the final codicil of October 26, 1779.

Katherine Maynwaring died at Aldsworth, near Westbourne, Sussex on August 14, 1780. Her obituary in *Gentleman's Magazine* of September 1780 describes her as "the relict of Capt. Arthur Maynwaring of the Marines who died at the Siege of Carthagena in 1741, and was the son of the celebrated Mrs. Oldfield, by Arthur Maynwaring, esq" (50: 445). The scandal of her marriage—if such it had been—followed her to the obituary page. Although she had been married for less than two years of her long life, she was identified in the obituary simply as her husband's widow. There was no record of the many lives she had touched and the things that mattered to her. That had been left for Katherine herself to set down.

* * * * *

In writing, and especially rewriting her will, Katherine Maynwaring created a document that became part of the public record but also had private significance for her. She became its principal reader, engaging in a process similar to that in Felicity Nussbaum's discussion of eighteenth-century women's diaries—meditating upon and revising her identity. If Katherine Maynwaring did not use her will in exactly the same way as the women journal writers that Nussbaum talks about—as "a private place in which to speak the unthought, unsaid, and undervalued" (154)—she did use it to confront the shrinking of her world in the last years of her life and to affirm the power she still had to order and control that world. There is no regular pattern in her amendments. She did not, for example, review and make changes at a particular time each year. The first three codicils were written in July and August of 1767. The closeness in time of these additions suggests to me her difficulty in assimilating the immensity of her loss and the many changes wrought by Margaret's death.[35] Codicils 4 and 5 were written

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in 1768, and codicil 6 in 1769. Nothing was added in 1770. Codicils 7 through 11 were made almost at yearly intervals from 1771 through 1775. Codicil 12 was also made in 1775, and codicils 13 and 14 in 1776 and 1779. I have already suggested that the gap between 1776 and 1779 reflects the settled character of her family and business affairs, and a lessening of interest in matters outside her immediate household as she approached her seventies.

If there is no obvious pattern in the evolution of the will, there is a discernible process. Each alteration involved a review of the past and an assessment of her own situation and the lives of the people to whom she was connected. The central event was of course Margaret's death. In 1767, in her late fifties, Katherine Maynwaring lost an essential element of her identity: she was no longer a mother. While she does not articulate this awareness directly, I believe it is a key to understanding why, after Margaret's death, Katherine did not destroy the 1764 will and begin afresh. One could argue that she simply wished to save herself the trouble of rewriting the many unchanged bequests. But I believe that the will of 1764 was crucial as a statement of her identity as a mother and as a record of the existence of a greatly loved daughter. The first codicil records the pain of her loss. Three subsequent codicils evoke the memory of Margaret through references to cousins and friends who were close to her. The focus of the later codicils, as I have noted, is increasingly on obligations to servants and on financial issues. The loving mother and devoted aunt are eventually displaced by the responsible, benevolent woman of property. Yet all of these selves—the components of her self-portrait—would be present for her as she reread her will and reconsidered her life.

In her essay "Court Testimony from the Past: Self and Culture in the Making of a Text," Elizabeth S. Cohen argues for the importance of written records of oral testimony from sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Italy:

> they are valuable because they allow us to "read" the selves not only of the literate, but also of some members of that majority of humanity, past as well as present, who could not write. For those who seek to understand the lives and minds of people neither élite nor dominant, and, in particular, of women, this notion that validates unconventional texts is especially welcome. (87)

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So, too, it is important to recover the traces of "selves" left behind by women in their wills. Few wills, it is true, offer the richness of detail and the narrative scope of Katherine Maynwaring's. Many lives are so obscure that it is not possible to unearth other kinds of information against which—in the case of Annie Oldfield, for example—the material of the will itself can be read. But even if a will tells us nothing more about a woman than how she disposed of a small estate, and even if the woman did not write the will herself, it is a first-person summation of her material and personal life as she wished it to be known.

NOTES

AUTHOR'S NOTE: I would like to dedicate this essay to the memory of my dear friend Marian Ury, whose encouragement and comments were helpful beyond estimation. Thanks also to Susan Groag Bell and Gloria C. Erlich for comments on an early stage of the MS, and to Amy Louise Erickson, for directing my attention to valuable sources in social history.

1. All page references are to the folio pages of the register copy in the Public Record Office, Principal Probate Registry, Prerogative Court of Canterbury: PROB 11/1069. The will and codicils, along with the deposition by Hester Bartlett and John Wetherall, occupy eleven and a half folio pages, beginning with page 100v. Throughout this essay I have generally cited codicils rather than folio numbers, for codicils are easier to locate. In quoting from this document I have preserved the original spelling, but I have silently changed "ff" at the beginning of some words to a single upper or lower-case "f," and I have lowered occasional superscriptions. Since there is no punctuation in the document, I have indicated sentence breaks with a "/" and I have used occasional ellipses.
2. See Erickson 211ff, and Lebsock, chapter five: "Women Alone: Property and Personalism." By "personalism," Lebsock refers to the tendency of women not only to favor certain legatees—principally female—over others, but also to express personal values. In contrast to men's wills, in which property was distributed according to formula, she finds that women's wills "rewarded special qualities of loyalty and affection" and "funneled property into the hands of the heirs who needed it the most" (136). Erickson looks at personalism in English women's wills in relation to the greater concern shown by women for female legatees and especially for the economic vulnerability of women (215–22).

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3. Kadar reviews critical approaches to non-traditional "life writing," including published and unpublished letters and diaries, but does not discuss wills. Lebsock and Erickson use wills along with other documents to examine aspects of women's lives, but are not concerned with individual wills as texts.

4. A transcript of the will is published as an appendix to the *Faithful Memoirs of the Life of Mrs. Anne Oldfield;* for a discussion of the will, see my *Celebrated Mrs. Oldfield* (166–7).

5. Where it is available, information about wills is included in the entries on performers in Highfill et al.

6. They are her lover, Brigadier General Charles Churchill, a groom of the chamber to George II; John, Lord Hervey, vice-chamberlain to George II; and John Hedges, treasurer to the Prince of Wales.

7. See especially the concluding discussion, 183–204.

8. For a discussion of eighteenth-century women's letters in relation to readers, privacy, and style, see Spacks 177–91.

9. Something needs to be said here about the "authentic voice" in the will. From both internal and external evidence, it is clear that the register copy was made from a holographic will and that the words are those of Katherine Maynwaring herself, not a lawyer or scrivener. On two occasions Maynwaring expresses concern that the document is "not perfected according to forms of Law"—which indicates that the will was not prepared for her, that the language is her own. Then there is a lengthy deposition appended to the register copy, in which her personal maid, Hester Bartlett, and a man named John Wetherall (who, with a J. Parker, witnessed the will and codicils) testify that they had seen her writing the will and that they recognize the handwriting and signatures to be hers. They add the information that they had been sent by Maynwaring's heir and executor to the house in Bruton Street to "help find and be present at the finding of" the will, and that "upon the opening of a Black Box in which the said Deceased Usually kept most of her papers and which had been sent since the Deceased's Death from Aldsworth in Sussex," they found the will and codicils. The implication is that Maynwaring had the box with her at the time of her death. She may have carried it with her on her various peregrinations, for the codicils were signed in a variety of locations. It is also clear from internal evidence that she reviewed the documents from time to time before adding or changing provisions.

10. McLysaght notes Pynes on record in County Cork since 1599—mainly, but not entirely, as Protestant gentry (126). Katherine's immediate ancestors are clearly Protestant. Both her father and her paternal grandfather married the daughters of English nobility

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and landed gentry. For Major Nicholas Pyne, listed among the "Forty-nine Officers" who served under Charles I or Charles II in the Wars of Ireland, see O'Hart 403. The same page also lists Henry Pyne and Nicholas Pyne among persons receiving grants under the Acts of Settlement and Explanation in 1661–65. This Henry Pyne would of course not have been Katherine's father but an earlier ancestor of the same name. For the wills of Katherine Maynwaring's father, in which a cousin Nicholas Pyne is mentioned, see the following note.

11. O'Hart 517, 520. See also Simms 125. As part of this confiscation of Catholic land, Sir Richard Pyne received the substantial estate of Waterpark in County Cork, probably the estate referred to in the abstract of Sir Richard Pyne's will (*Irish Wills and Pleadings* IR/G 101: 175) as "my son's estate in Coy Corke." The wording suggests that the estate had passed to Henry Pyne through a deed of gift prior to the making of Richard Pyne's will. Henry Pyne's will, dated May 30, 1712, refers to him as "Henry Pyne of Waterpark, Coy Cork," and the abstract refers to "lands of Waterpark" among other properties in Ireland (*Irish Wills and Pleadings* IR/G 102: 87).

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12. *Registers of the Parish of St. Mary le Bow* 337.
13. *Irish Wills and Pleadings* IR/G 101: 175. Anne Pyne was born in late 1706 or early 1707, for her age was given as 23 at the time of her marriage to Henry Cavendish on June 9, 1730 (*The Register of the Chapel Royal, Westminster*). Apparently there was a younger sister, born sometime between 1709 and 1712, for the will of Anne and Katherine's father, made in May of 1712, leaves "the rest of plate & all furniture to 3 daurs" (*Irish Wills and Pleadings* IR/G 102: 88). The third daughter either did not survive into adulthood or had died without issue by 1764, for Katherine makes no specific reference in the will to another sister or to any nieces or nephews other than the children of Anne Pyne Cavendish. For the identity of the mysterious "Mrs Cossart" and her children, see note 27.
14. Cokayne 5:104–5. Descended illegitimately from William Cavendish, Earl of Devonshire, these Cavendishes had an estate at Doveridge Park, Derbyshire. They also had an Anglo-Irish connection; Anne Pyne's husband, Sir Henry Cavendish, was the son of Mary Tyrrell Cavendish, whose grandfather was James Ussher, Archbishop of Armagh.
15. *Registers of St. Benet's and St. Peter, Paul's Wharf* 102. Owing to its proximity to the Doctors' Commons, this church was often the site of marriages obtained by special license, but I can only speculate that this may have had significance for the marriage of Katherine and Arthur Maynwaring.

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16. Stone observes that a circumstance such as Erasmus Darwin's fathering of two illegitimate children in the 1770s, with no ill effect upon his professional life, "could not have happened in the late nineteenth century, or, for that matter, in the early seventeenth" (534).

17. Her father's will, made in May of 1712, with a codicil signed in July, refers to "lands of Waterpark als[o] Ballyneglass, Killaran, Glanagurteen in Co[unt]y Cork & Little Burgess in Co[unt]y Tipp[erar]y." Nothing is said in his will about the inheritance of these properties, which may have passed to his wife and children through deeds of trust. I am assuming that Waterpark became the property of Anne, and that after her marriage it became the property of her husband, Henry Cavendish. When the Cavendish family was elevated from a baronetcy to a barony in the early nineteenth century, the grandson of Henry Cavendish and Anne Pyne took the name of this estate for his title, becoming the first Baron Waterpark. Unfortunately, as I was informed by the present Lord Waterpark, the Waterpark estate was burned to the ground during the troubles in Ireland and all the family papers destroyed. If Waterpark was inherited by or deeded to Anne Pyne, then Katherine's estate in Ireland would have been one (or perhaps several) of the smaller properties mentioned in their father's will.

18. *Irish Wills and Pleadings* IR/G 101: 175. The actual wording of this provision orders that Anne and Katherine were to have these portions "if they marry with consent of their father mother & grandmother / this is in fulfillment of agreement made at mar[riage] of son."

19. Katherine Maynwaring's will identifies the beneficiaries of the Irish estate as the children of Sir Henry Cavendish, Baronet, "by his first wife." For the date of his remarriage, see Cokayne 104.

20. The exception was the Irish estate, for which Katherine made specific provisions in the event Margaret died unmarried. If Margaret did not marry, she was not free to dispose of the Irish estate as it suited her, but would have to follow the provisions set down by Katherine. For a discussion of these provisions, see note 23.

21. Erickson observes that women more often than men would name a daughter executrix "even if they had sons as well" (220). Of course, Katherine had no other children, so her nomination of Margaret is not so remarkable. But throughout her study, Erickson remarks that although men most often named their wives as executors, this was less often the case where a large estate was involved, in which case a male relative or friend would be named executor. Erickson mentions no instances of a young unmarried daughter being named sole executor of a large estate.

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22. Unlike her grandfather (see note 18), Katherine placed no conditions on Margaret's choice of a husband. Such conditions often appear in wills, even when the testators' circumstances were humble. See Vann 362–3. Katherine herself had not made a "suitable" marriage. The reference to her daughter's education (along with her social position and fortune) may merely allude to Margaret's attainment of the accomplishments expected of a young woman of her "rank and fortune."

23. In these bequests I find an instance of personalism. Both Frances and Pyne had, as noted above, received cash legacies of £100 in the 1764 will. In codicil 1 Katherine specifically retains this legacy for Pyne but she cancels it for Frances, noting that the £1000 legacy (which both young women received in codicil 1, along with their three older sisters) and the diamond earrings were "sufficient" for Frances. I don't interpret this as an indication of Katherine's favoring Pyne over Frances, but rather of her care in assessing the value of their respective personal gifts. The diamond earrings were evidently much more valuable than the items of jewelry left to Pyne.

24. If Margaret had married, the estate would have constituted a significant portion of her dowry and would have become her husband's property (and probably the basis of her widow's jointure). If Margaret had died unmarried, the Irish estate would presumably have passed to the eldest male relative, Katherine's nephew Henry Cavendish, as it eventually did. In addition to inheriting Katherine's Irish estate and Bruton Street house, Henry Cavendish also inherited Waterpark and would inherit his father's estate in Derbyshire. If Katherine seems to scant him throughout the will in favor of his younger brother and sisters it is because of this. We see Katherine taking some pains, in these provisions, to assure that the younger Cavendish children, and some other relatives—the Cossart children—will benefit from the Irish estate.

25. I have not been able to discover the identity of Mrs. Cossart. For a while, I thought she might be the third daughter mentioned by Henry Pyne in his will. Such a daughter could not have been born later than May of 1712, when Henry Pyne wrote his will. By 1764 she would have been in her early fifties, and if she married fairly late she could have had two children who were not yet of age, as the Cossart children are described in Katherine's will. But Mrs. Cossart could also have been a married and deceased daughter of Anne Pyne Cavendish, and I now incline to this view. (Throughout the will, Katherine refers to her married nieces by their married names: Lady Bradstreet, Mrs. Burrows, Mrs. Quin, Mrs. Flood, and Mrs. Crosbie.) Whatever her relationship to Katherine, I think Mrs. Cossart was dead by 1764. Except where she is mentioned as the mother of the two children, she is named

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only once in the will, and that is in connection with a leather fan which she and Lady Bradstreet had given to Margaret Maynwaring. The fan was to be returned to Lady Bradstreet. All we know about Mrs. Cossart's children is that they were probably still under age in 1767, when Katherine reconfirmed their bequest (codicil 1). Nowhere does she identify the children by name or even indicate their gender. But they must have been Pyne family relations of some degree of closeness, for their bequests were to be paid out of the Irish estate. I am guessing that the £500 bequests to the Cossart children (smaller than those to the Cavendish nieces and nephews) were Katherine Maynwaring's way of providing for orphaned great-nieces or great-nephews.

26. This number includes Katherine's maternal cousin, Lord Edgcumbe, mentioned only in connection with his role in the arrangement of Margaret's marriage settlement; the seven Cavendish children; Mrs. Cossart and the two Cossart children; and the three Pynes.

27. There is an intriguing reference in codicil 6 to the sum of two guineas, which Miss Drake had given to Katherine's cook, Amy Hutt, "by my orders" and were now to be paid back to Miss Drake. I can't even speculate as to what this money was for and how or why Miss Drake might have been involved with Katherine's cook, but this is another instance of Katherine's concern about payment of obligations.

28. Hecht discusses the "highly anomalous" position of the companion, who could be a woman of good family fallen on hard times, or a "superior sort" of lady's maid whose work was less well defined. The companion "was used with more respect and accorded a greater degree of formal courtesy, as is indicated by the 'Mrs.' generally placed before her surname when she was addressed" (63).

29. Hecht 6–7. The establishment would have included as principal servants a coachman, personal maids (Hecht uses the term "lady's maids") for herself and Margaret, and a cook, with additional footmen, housemaids, and the washerwoman as under-servants.

30. According to Hecht (whose research was based in part on newspaper advertisements, in which prospective servants stated the length of time spent in their previous situations), three to four years was an average period for service (82). There was no formal age for retirement; from the anecdotal accounts in Hecht, it seems that servants who had been with an employer for many years were provided for, and continued to work on some basis, until their death.

31. Hecht (142–9) provides tables for wages, based in part on the sums mentioned in newspaper advertisements. The figures sometimes vary greatly, depending on the wealth of the employer, the size

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and location of the household, etc. Taking 1770 as a base year, a coachman might receive between £11 and 20 guineas; a footman, £6-10; a lady's maid, about 10 guineas; a cook, £10-12; a housemaid, £6 to 7 guineas; a maid of all work, £4-8; a laundry maid, about £7. If her provisions for her servants' annuities and bequests reflect the salaries she paid them, then Katherine Maynwaring was following prevailing practice. That she wanted all of the servants to receive basic bequests of at least £10, even if that was more than a year's wages, bespeaks a degree of generosity.

32. Thomas discusses changing conditions of animal life in eighteenth-century England, particularly from 1740 onwards, when there was "a growing stream of writing on the subject" of more humane treatment of animals (149).

33. The fluctuation of interest rates throughout the eighteenth century affected the value of fixed-rate investments such as consolidated annuities, and the financial crisis of 1772 was another matter for Katherine to worry about. For a discussion of the crisis, which would have affected Maynwaring's investments in the months before the writing of codicil 9, and may have panicked her into selling some of her holdings, see Ashton 127–9.

34. In addition to the coachman and cook whose death she notes in 1772 (codicil 8), she undoubtedly outlived the original coach horses, the dog Crack, and the cat Sam. In 1773 (codicil 9) she leaves £20 to "the Coachmen who is at present with me." This was the man who replaced John Buck, who had died. In 1776 (codicil 13) she leaves £10 to "the Coachman that is now with me." Either this is a new servant to whom she does not feel very attached, or it is in addition to the £20 mentioned in 1773. I suspect the former, because she is usually quite precise about indicating additions and changes.

35. In her introduction to *The Private Self*, Shari Benstock observes that women find through autobiographical writing "a means to survive childbirth, illness, the deaths of spouses and children, loss of cultural identity and personal regard, fear of failure, aging, death, loss of beauty and physical strength" (5).

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M. F. K. Fisher and the Embodiment of Desire: A Study in Autobiography and Food as Metaphor

Julie D. Campbell

For what is food? It is not only a collection of products that can be used for statistical or nutritional studies. It is also, and at the same time, a system of communication, a body of images, a protocol of usages, situations, and behavior. . . . [F]ood sums up and transmits a situation; it constitutes an information; it signifies.

—Roland Barthes (49–50)

Primarily known as an authority on food and travel, M. F. K. Fisher (1908–1992) has been called the best prose writer in America by W. H. Auden, and her commentaries on food and cooking have placed her in culinary history with such celebrities as Julia Child and James Beard. Though frequently cited by food critics, Fisher has received little attention from academic writers—until recently. In her essay, "'I Yam What I Yam': Cooking, Culture, and Colonialism," for example, Anne Goldman connects Fisher's two-fold interest in literature and food to the practice of autobiography: "in addition to the domestic and literary labors foregrounded in [Fisher's] personal narrative, another form of work is operating: that process of self-reflection whose end product is the construction of the subject" (169). Fisher's own statement in *The Gastronomical Me* that "one of the pleasantest of all emotions is to know that I, I with my brain and my hands, have nourished my beloved few, that I have concocted a stew or a story, a rarity or a plain dish, to sustain them truly against the hungers of the world" (367), illustrates how literary and culinary arts merge in her work to satisfy a variety of "hungers." While agreeing with Goldman that for Fisher "to write about food is to write about the self as well" (169), I would also contend that Fisher's commentary on

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food and cooking, especially in those works about her years in France and Switzerland, dramatically illustrates Julia Kristeva's understanding of the role which alienation plays in the construction of the self. Fisher's account of her introduction to European culture mirrors the foreigner's experience that Kristeva outlines in *Strangers to Ourselves*.[1] Thus while Goldman emphasizes the political implications of the "Anglo-American" Fisher writing about her European culinary experiences at the beginning of the Second World War, I am interested in the broader range of autobiographical revelations arising from Fisher's cross-cultural comparisons. Fisher's culinary metaphors ultimately reveal how food, symbolic of culture and personal taste, creates Barthes's "system of communication" as it "signifies" the symbiotic relationship between Fisher's writing about food and writing her life.

This study examines the autobiographical significance of Fisher's use of food and cooking as metaphor. Through this method, Fisher's accounts of her physical experiences with food convey both positive and negative reactions to events in her life. More specifically, food becomes the means for coping with physical and psychological needs, which together compose a multidimensional concept of "hunger." "When I write of hunger," asserts Fisher, "I am really writing about love and the hunger for it . . . [and] the warmth and the riches and fine reality of hunger satisfied . . . and it is all one" (*GM* 353). By examining such assertions, I will also describe Fisher's emerging sense of self as she explores how exposure to European culture developed her own tastes and desires. Fisher's conflicting desires for assimilation and for recognition as the other support Kristeva's theory that "the foreigner challenges both the identity of the group and [her] own" (42).

Fisher's concerns with food, travel, personal hunger, and national identity often coalesce in her accounts of culinary experiences from her first two marriages and her travels in France during middle age. In 1929, Mary Frances Kennedy married Alfred Young Fisher, a poet and scholar intent on earning his Ph.D. at the University of Dijon. They sailed to France for the first time in "Student Third" class on the *Berengaria*. As she regales readers with her introduction to French cuisine in *The Gastronomical Me* (1943), her autobiography of the development of her palate, Fisher also

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supplies vignettes illustrating the rise and fall of this first love. "In 1929 the stock market crashed," Fisher begins her chapter "Sea Change 1929–1931," "and I got married for the first time and traveled into a foreign land across an ocean. All those things affected me, and the voyage perhaps most" (*GM* 385). The market crash foreshadows the divorce which would end her first marriage, and the food images candidly reveal the course this marriage would take. Negative portents dot her account of the ship's cuisine: "in spite of my rosy daze I knew the food was bad . . . heavy and graceless" (*GM* 387). Eating little, she chooses instead to "pluck happily at the baskets of grapes and beribboned goodies that bulged out the walls of [the] minute cabin." Fisher stresses the dreamlike state of her mind and body on this journey. Earlier she noted that on long sea voyages her extremities would frequently go numb. She brings this story to a close by slyly remarking, "Occasionally I pinched my little fingers, but they were still asleep . . . like me" (*GM* 387).

Though some of the early signs are ominous, Fisher writes fondly of their arrival in Paris and the following trip down to Dijon. In "The Measure of My Powers 1929–1930," her new gastronomic experiences delight her in ways that parallel her new sexual experiences:

> Paris was everything that I had dreamed, the late September we first went there. It should always be seen, the first time, with the eyes of childhood or of love. I was almost twenty-one, but much younger than girls are now, I think. And I was wrapped in a passionate mist.
>
> Al and I stayed on the Quai Voltaire. That was before the trees were cut down, and in the morning I would stand on our balcony and watch him walk slowly along by the book stalls, and wave to him if he looked up at me. Then I would get into bed again.
>
> The hot chocolate and the rich croissants were the most delicious things, there in bed with the Seine flowing past me and pigeons wheeling around the gray Palace mansards, that I had ever eaten. They were really the first things I had tasted since we were married . . . tasted to remember. They were a part of the warmth and excitement of that hotel room, with Paris waiting. (*GM* 393)

Kristeva argues that "the shattering of repression is what leads one to cross a border and find oneself in a foreign country," and that such a "daring action" is usually accompanied by

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"sexual frenzy" brought about by escape from prohibitions and the sense that "everything is possible" (13–14). Though hardly a "sexual frenzy," Fisher's account of her honeymoon describes simultaneously crossing geographical and physical borders in terms euphoric enough to suggest that at that moment certainly anything was possible. What Fisher adds to Kristeva's account, however, is a gastronomical awakening. Fisher's first exuberant taste of French cuisine—the chocolate and croissants—confirms her lasting engagement with the culture.

A rapturous encounter with her first soufflé of potatoes is strikingly similar. After leaving Paris, she and Al stop to eat in the courtyard of a hotel in Avallon, where she reports that "one important thing happened":

> We were hungry, and everything tasted good, but I forget now what we ate, except for a kind of soufflé of potatoes. It was hot, light, with a brown crust, and probably chives and grated parmesan cheese were somewhere in it. But the great thing about it was that it was served alone, in a course all by itself.
>
> I felt a secret justification swell in me, a pride such as I've seldom known since, because all my life, it seemed, I had been wondering rebelliously about potatoes. I didn't care for them much . . . [but] I felt that they could be good, if they were cooked respectfully. (*GM* 394–5)

The passionate imagination conferred here upon a lowly dish of root vegetables arises from Fisher's long-standing prejudices against the plain cooking of her childhood home. Her grandmother's diet, the product of a "nervous stomach," is frequently a point of reference in Fisher's works. She notes with distaste that this American cuisine included "no fried things or pastries, no oils, no seasonings" (*GM* 360). Potatoes were always served quite unimaginatively with meat—never on their own as a single course. "If I ever had my way," Fisher had sworn at that time, "I would make such delicious things of potatoes that they would be a whole meal, and never would I think of them as the last part of the word, Meat-and-." France had fulfilled her vow. "And now," she writes, "here in the sunny courtyard of the first really French restaurant I had ever been in, I saw my theory proved. It was a fine moment" (*GM* 395). In this way, Fisher begins to abandon her admittedly grudging acceptance of the American status quo for food. France gave her permission to give more credit to her own discerning taste.

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Fisher's literary snapshots of her Parisian honeymoon, complete with her comparisons of American and European culinary practices, bear out Jean-François Revel's theory that "in gastronomy as in numerous other realms, history is indissociable from geography" (213). As Fisher's private history unfolds on the map she sketches with each move from meal to meal and city to city, her early gastronomical adventures in France become virtually indistinguishable from her recognition of the development of her international sensibilities. In Dijon, her dining adventures underscore her larger struggle to learn French ways while defending her American identity. She describes their first meal—drinks at the Café de Paris followed by dinner at Ribaudot's—as a "shy stupid one, but even if we had never gone back and never learned gradually how to order food and wine, it would still be among the important ones of my life" (*GM* 399). Her description of herself and Al that night as "shy," "stupid," "ignorant," and "embarrassed" contrasts sharply with her reverent praise of their waiter, Charles, who "with his certain deft guidance" began to teach them "what wine we wanted and why" (*GM* 461).

And yet, though Fisher humbly accepts her position as an ignorant American during the early stages of her gastronomic education, she defends herself and her country against French prejudice in other areas, especially etiquette. As "the wife of an almost-faculty-member," she recalls being invited to a formal luncheon for an important visiting scholar, concluding that she was seated next to him because she "had gradually erased the firm impression among the faculty wives that all Yankee women either got tight in public on strange cocktails or spat in the drawing room" (*GM* 429–30). Scoffing at such French expectations, Fisher further shows her contempt by criticizing the dining traditions for such situations. She deplores "the long oppressively polite table," and records her dismay at discovering that the guest of honor is not familiar with how to eat whole *écrevisses*. She shows him the correct way to use "the silver pliers, claw-cracker, gouges, and forceps," and all goes well, but she still does not believe "that a host should serve anything that cannot be eaten with ease and finesse by all his guests" (*GM* 430–31). Yearning to be like the French with their refined gastronomical expertise, yet offended by their prejudices and exclusionary tactics against Americans, Fisher continually

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undermines "both the identity of the group and [her] own" (Kristeva 13). The result is not a subversion, but rather a strengthening of her faith in her own behavior and instincts, a phenomenon that she repeatedly underscores in her writing.

Her instincts about her personal life also pervade the passages about cafe society and her husband's work. The Café de Paris, for example, "was Al's first love, and a faithful one. He worked there almost every day we lived in Dijon, and grew to know its waiters, the prostitutes who had their morning cards-and-coffee there, its regular patrons, and the rolling population of stock-actors and singers who were playing at the theatre across the street" (*GM* 398). Almost fifty years later, Fisher repeats these lines, but then describes Al's habit in more detail:

> Al loved to talk with the prostitutes at the café, who went in there to have their coffee, during the morning. He loved the prostitutes, as I was soon to learn. He loved to talk with them. I do not think he ever went with one to her chambers, partly because he was horrified by social diseases, but he asked all of them very intimate brotherly, fatherly probing questions. (*Long Ago* 40)

Thanks to this same fear of "social diseases," Fisher recalls that Al "was afraid to sleep with me for a month" after her first visit to a public bath in Dijon (*Long Ago* 26). Such unsettling personal anecdotes crop up in long passages about learning to drink Pernod and eating "hot minnows, cooked whole and piled unblinking in a bowl" at "the small restaurants along the canal de Dijon," or oysters at Crespin, where there were "Portugaises, Marennes, Vertes of different qualities, so fresh that their delicate flanges drew back at your breath on them" (*Long Ago* 41). Nevertheless these brief foreshadowings of marital distress not only prepare readers for later disclosures about the end of her first marriage, but grant the certainty of hindsight to her writing throughout.

Fisher's incorporation of such personal observations into her commentary on food and culture is also a hallmark of her unique style—and the reasons that critics often have difficulty classifying her work. Her marital problems, for instance, while hinted at in *The Gastronomical Me* and *Long Ago in France*, are brought fully to light in 1993, with the publication of *Stay Me, Oh Comfort Me: Journals and Stories, 1933-1941*, which contains

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a 1938 letter to Larry Powell outlining the marital difficulties that led to her divorce and second marriage (167–73).[2] However, in *The Gastronomical Me*, Fisher continues to categorize major turns in her life as "sea changes."

Take, for example, her second sea voyage. This time she is alone, going home to visit her family in California while Al remains in France. Fisher's earlier sense of emotional numbness has dissipated, and she is now awake to the possibility of eminent crisis in her marriage. Although on this trip she was in the more comfortable tourist class, she writes that her accommodations were "miserable" and the food utterly unmemorable, except for its inferiority even to the first ship's. "I ate almost none of it," she says, "in spite of the fact that my cabin, this time, was as empty of hothouse grapes as it was of my dear Al" (*GM* 388). Clearly the sustenance offered by the ship's menu is as repugnant as it was on her previous trip. This time, however, she has neither the unnaturally produced grapes to assuage her literal and symbolic hunger, nor what she calls "that rosy daze" or "that special and inviolable naïveté of a new bride" to protect her from more harsh, realistic consideration of her marriage (*GM* 387, 386).

In both accounts of her early voyages between her old land and her new one, Fisher captures the sense of being between two cultures and between childhood and adulthood. Her sense of alienation in both situations crystallizes during these "sea changes." Kristeva notes that this alienation can provide cultural insight: "Being alienated from myself, as painful as that may be, provides me with that exquisite distance within which perverse pleasure begins, as well as the possibility of my imagining and thinking, the impetus of my culture" (13–14). But Fisher's voyage vignettes go further, with their depictions of a physical and emotional alienation which also provides the "painful" but "exquisite distance" necessary for taking stock of her own personal situation.

In 1934, while living in California and still married to Al Fisher, but becoming increasingly dissatisfied with their relationship, Fisher went on another voyage, this time to France and Switzerland. She set sail with Dillwyn Parrish, a long-time friend of Al's and the man she would come to consider the love of her life. They traveled with his mother, who presumably played chaperone; his estranged wife Gigi remained in

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California to concentrate on her acting career. This voyage proved to be another "sea change" for Fisher, so strengthening the bond between her and Parrish that a short while later the now divorced Parrish returned to Switzerland with his sister Anne, bought a crumbling old house in a vineyard above Vevey, and invited M. F. K. and Al Fisher to join him there, drawn by what Fisher's sister Norah Kennedy Barr calls "a wildly ingenuous idea that somehow they could succeed in communal living." The experiment failed: "Al escaped this situation a year later by accepting a position at Smith College, and at the end of 1937 Mary Frances made the trip back to Whittier to announce her intention to divorce Al and marry Dillwyn" (Barr x).

Though they had only one idyllic year together before he suffered the onset of Buerger's Disease, a circulatory illness that caused him constant physical and psychological pain until he took his life in 1941, unlike her account of her years with Al, Fisher's writing about her life with Parrish displays an increasing cultural confidence as she explores the internal geography of her soul through her accounts of eating. Stories about food express the intricacies of their love and her distress at the brevity of their life together. This love grants Fisher an assurance missing from her earlier work. When comparing American and European culinary customs, the words "shy" and "stupid" no longer figure into her descriptions. The prose in the chapter "The Measure of My Powers 1936–1939" rings with a new note of authority, the product presumably of her status as a divorce survivor, veteran expatriate, and happy partner of Parrish. She has reached that point in her life when, as Kristeva puts it, "Meeting balances wandering." Meeting, according to Kristeva, is "a crossroad of two othernesses" that "welcomes the foreigner without tying him down, opening the host to his visitor without committing him" (11). Both levels of "meeting" are at work in this section of Fisher's memoirs. By becoming property owners, drawing a livelihood from their land in Switzerland, Fisher and Parrish cease to wander, at least for the moment. Though still foreigners "hosted" by another country, in this place their old and their adopted cultures meet in a more stable situation than Fisher has previously experienced abroad. But further, the comparative permanence of their arrangement lets Fisher and Parrish become hosts to a variety of foreign guests, thus reversing the host/foreigner paradigm. Even if only temporarily,

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this balance between old and new, between host and foreigner, lends authority and self-assurance to her narrative.

Published only two years after Parrish's suicide, Fisher's writing from this period is grounded in her garden at Le Pâquis. She describes the place in the restrained terms of proper pride, laced with traces of nostalgia:

> We grew beautiful salads, a dozen different kinds, and several herbs. There were shallots and onion and garlic, and I braided them into long silky ropes, and hung them over the rafters in the attic. In one of the cellars we stored cabbages and apples and tomatoes and other things on slatted shelves, or in bins. And all the time we ate what we were growing. (*GM* 486–7)

Here a landscape of plenty meshes perfectly with their solidarity as a couple who need nothing more than what they can themselves together produce. As with her honeymoon, Fisher's contentment with life during this period is mirrored in her accounts of new experiences with food. This time, however, instead of eating in restaurants and learning from waiters what is best to eat, she revels in the seasonal cycle of country life, exploring the whole process of food production, preservation, and preparation with Parrish. Unlike Al, who was as inexperienced as she, Parrish, whom she calls Chexbres in *The Gastronomical Me*, is older and presumably wiser. Best of all,

> Chexbres was a fine gardener; he read books and liked to experiment with new ways of doing things, but besides all that he had the feeling of growth and fertility and the seasons in his bones and flesh. I learned all the time from him, and we worked together two summers in Le Pâquis. (*GM* 485)[3]

No longer burdened with the cares of being an "almost-faculty-wife," in this new setting Fisher follows her own vocation, exploring culinary practices and experimenting with food:

> I canned often. . . . We had three cellars, and I filled one of them with beautiful gleaming jars for the winter. It was simple enough to do it in little bits instead of in great harried rushes as my grandmother used to, and when I went down into the coolness and saw all the things sitting there so richly quiet on the shelves, I had a special feeling of contentment. It was a reassurance of safety against hunger, very primitive and satisfying. (*GM* 485)

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Her concern about "safety against hunger" signifies more than worry about physical need. Her full cellar, so richly stocked and insulated against the outside world, not only parallels her relationship with Parrish, but like the garden, also signifies their self-sufficiency. And like her earlier revised notions about potatoes, Fisher enacts a subtle cultural comparison by first invoking her grandmother's rush to can and then asserting that her way is better.

Her tone in this passage is more assured as well, for unlike her earlier discoveries, she now draws authority from the land itself. "It was the oldest soil either of us had ever touched, and it seemed almost bursting with life," she recalls, "We ran a kind of race with it, exciting and exhausting" (*GM* 486).[4] Of course in retrospect their race to keep up with the garden is a race against the brevity, however rich, of their time together. By experimenting with new ways to cook her garden produce, in addition to learning the ways of the soil, Fisher learned new culinary skills that differed greatly from the techniques employed in her childhood home. "I talked more with the Italian-Swiss," she explains, "and learned ways of cooking vegetables in their own juices, with sweet butter or thick olive oil to encourage them a little; tomatoes and onions and sweet peppers and eggplants, and all the summer things" (*GM* 487).

Fisher and Parrish, however, did not completely eschew American ways:

> Chexbres could fry tomatoes the way his family cook Madie did, in Delaware, so that the slices were dark brown and crisp all through, and yet delicate and tender. Sometimes we made corn oysters. We'd sit right by the stove, and lift the shaggy little cakes from the hot butter to our plates, and float them down with beer chilled in the fountain.
>
> (The corn we brought from America, and except for young cow-corn eaten by a few hardy peasants near Zurich, it was the only such thing for humans in all Switzerland, I think. The passing country people watched it curiously, and so did we, because it behaved as if it knew itself to be in alien lands, helpless before strange winds and stranger weather, and sent out a dozen crazy tassels for every ear, to be sure of survival. The next year it was less hysterical, and several neighbors planted it from our seed, and ate it from our recipes.) (*GM* 487)

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Swiss-Italian cooking and the corn patch in Vevey symbolize Fisher's and Parrish's own blending of American and European cultures. Like the corn, Fisher knew herself "to be in alien lands," but also like the corn, with time she began to fit in. Certainly not a native, but no longer "just off the boat," she, along with "passing country people," watches the corn's behavior curiously. Sea changes, times of upheaval, and new direction have given way to taking "the measure of her powers" during that time when she feels most at home abroad.

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Her worry in Dijon about conforming to native customs gives way to pride in the innovations that she and Parrish introduce in Vevey. In addition to the corn, they also experimented with their own theories of horticulture. Why, Fisher asks, "should we put in fifty tomato plants with elaborate stakes, as our neighbors told us to do, when we could get as much fruit from ten plants put in the way we thought best?" Even though he felt "truly apologetic," Parrish "studied the winds, the soil, the way the rains came, and he knew more about how to grow things than the peasants could have learned in a thousand years, in spite of their cruel toiling" (*GM* 485). Fisher's ability to take pride in Parrish's accomplishments, as well as her own, attests to the balance and security she felt during this period in her life. Though indisputably foreigners, their alienation is mitigated by their successful life together.

And paradoxically, from this foundation, they were able to transform their time in Vevey into a successful "meeting" between "others." As Kristeva notes, such a meeting "often begins with a food fest: bread, salt, and wine. A meal, a nutritive communion":

> The nourishing and initially somewhat animal banquet rises to the vaporous levels of dreams and ideas: the hospitality merry-makers also become united for a while through the spirit. A miracle of flesh and thought, the banquet of hospitality is the foreigners' utopia—the cosmopolitanism of a moment, the brotherhood of guests who soothe and forget their differences, the banquet is outside of time. It imagines itself eternal in the intoxication of those who are nevertheless aware of its temporary frailty. (11–12)

Fisher recalls a number of such "hospitality rituals" at Le Pâquis which achieved, if only for a brief time, such a balance between

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self and other, between native and foreigner, as her native culture collided with her adopted one—and with several others. As with Parrish's tomatoes, they accomplished this by at first flying in the face of local and traditional custom. Take, for example, their household renovations. "The part of the house we added to the little stone building" actually "disturbed and shocked the architect and all the contractors for floor and plumbing and such, because it was designed so that we, the owners of the place, could be its cooks and servants" (*GM* 487). Though their Swiss neighbors found this alteration "quite impractical" and strange, considering the size of the house, Fisher and Parrish were unfazed. They wanted a home without servants in which they could take care of their own cooking and household arrangements conveniently. And the renovations proved highly practical when the Parrishes reversed the roles of host and foreigner. "It was fun to invite Swiss people there for meals," Fisher recalls, "they were baffled and titillated." On one notable occasion "some oddly mixed expatriates and French-Swiss friends" who knew the Parrishes "only in restaurants and as dancing partners and such until then" came from Montreux. These visitors "were frankly curious about the house and the way we lived, so different from anything they knew." When they arrived, they chatted, ate canapés, and had drinks. When, however, they realized that there were no servants, they became dismayed, fearing that they would be disappointed in the meal, or worse yet, go home hungry. "Chexbres and I let them suffer," Fisher exults, "until we thought the alcoholic intake was fairly adjusted to their twelve or fifteen rather jaded bodies":

> Then, with the smug skill of two magicians, we flicked away the empty glasses and the tired canapés, and slid the salad and the rolls into place on the old dresser. He gave the ragout a few odorous stirs while I saw that little tables in the living room were clear of ashtrays and such . . . and the puzzled hungry people, almost tittering with relief and excitement, flocked like children into the kitchen for their suppers. (*GM* 488–9)

In this moment, Fisher's mature guests closely resemble the "greedy child" or "famished baby" Kristeva describes as part

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of that "nutritive communion" between host and guest. Fisher the host gleefully recounts her guests' reactions to the "pot of really masterful stew," salad, crisp rolls, and ultimately the "chilled bowl of pears" prepared Fisher's own way, baked "with honey and kirsch, and . . . sour cream." Monsieur Kugner, the owner of "the kind of small luxurious hotel in Montreux that always had at least two Eastern princes in it," kept insisting that they reveal their chef. At the same time, "an old Swiss judge, important as God to himself and his small community," made a special toast to his wife in a "suddenly human voice": "Anneli, my dear, I had forgotten I could have such an agreeable evening with you in the room." Knowing "what he meant after so many years of provincial respectability," his wife lifted her glass in response. And when the group sent a note to one of their American friends back in Montreux who had been too ill to come, Kugner wrote, "We are sitting so comfortable by a beautiful American cheminée fire, by Lager beer, thinking of you and take a big mouth full. L. Kugner." (*GM* 488–90).[5]

The "American" dinners continued into the summer, with the guests remaining delighted. "In the summer there were always a lot of people," for "Vevey was on the road to almost any place in Europe." Though "sometimes there were complications, political, national, religious, even racial," she recalls that "in general we managed to segregate the more violent prejudices" (*GM* 491). One evening, for instance, she served dinner to "several charming but rabid Fascists from Rome, one of them a priest," while Chexbres took their other guests, three men "on their way to join the Spanish Loyalists," into town for dinner. On another comic evening, a half-back from Princeton, who was hiking through Europe, arrived wearing nothing but "shoes, slacks, and the cowbell around his neck." At dinner they seated him next to "an old English lady trailing chiffon, diamonds, and monkey fur." Fisher relays that "at first she was frankly scared of him," but before the evening was over, "a most abrupt and vivid little affair" had developed, with the woman giving the boy food from her plate as if he were her own son (*GM* 492). Clearly, then, Fisher's dinner parties illustrate Kristeva's "cosmopolitanism of a moment," her "brotherhood of guests" which create the "foreigners' utopia"—or at least when Fisher can get all her guests to sit down together.

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One dinner in the garden at Le Pâquis was special enough for Fisher to address in more than one work. In both accounts her description of that evening shows her awareness, if only in retrospect, of what Kristeva calls the "temporary frailty" of such utopian meetings. Fisher first briefly describes the dinner in *The Gastronomical Me.* Her parents had come for a visit before the remodeling had been finished:

> We [went] up the hills from town after the workingmen had left, and spread our supper cloth on a table under the terrace apple tree, among all the last rubble of the building. As fast as Father and Chexbres could pick the peas, Mother and I would shell them, and then on a little fire of shavings I'd cook them perhaps four or five minutes in a heavy casserole, swirling them in butter and their own steam. We'd eat them with little cold pullets cooked for us in Vevey, and good bread and the thin white wine of the coast that lay about us. (484)

Fisher's reserved language holds emotion in check, as she invokes that simple, harmonious moment when her past—her parents—comes face to face with her present—her new life with Parrish. Six years later, in 1949, the moment reappears in the chapter "P Is for Peas," in *An Alphabet for Gourmets.* Three defining moments are related. First she describes her grandmother's fresh peas in cream, a fond memory of her American childhood. These compare favorably with the second moment, at Foyot's in Paris, when she had *petits pois au beurre* (663–4). This comparison signifies Fisher's coming to terms with the difference between her native and adopted cultures. A peace is made in this passage, which like her discussion of vegetable cooking and canning techniques, is quite different in tone from her early accusatory prose about American potatoes.

The third moment—her *pièce de resistance*—is the return to the peas in the garden at Le Pâquis. Both that day in the hills and the cooking itself are described more fully:

> I stirred up the fire. When the scant half-inch of water boiled, I tossed in the peas, a good six quarts or more, and slapped on the heavy lid as if a devil might get out. The minute steam showed I shook the whole like mad. Someone brought me a curl of thin pink ham and a glass of wine cold from the fountain. Revivified, if that were any more possible, I shook the pot again.

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> I looked up at the terrace. . . . There sat most of the people in the world I loved, in a thin light that was pink with the Alpen glow, blue with a veil of pine smoke from the hearth. Their voices sang with a certain remoteness into the clear air, and suddenly from across the curve of the Lower Corniche a cow in Monsieur Rogivue's orchard moved her head among the meadow flowers and shook her bell in a slow, melodious rhythm, a kind of hymn. My father lifted up his face at the sweet sound and, his fists all stained with green-pea juice, said passionately, "God, but I feel good!" I felt near to tears.
>
> The peas were now done. After one more shake I whipped off the lid and threw in a big pat of butter, which had a bas-relief of William Tell on it. I shook in salt, ground in pepper, and then swirled the pot over the low flames until Tell had disappeared. Then I ran like hell, up the path lined with candytuft and pinks, past the fountain where bottles shone promisingly through the crystal water, to the table. (666)

Fisher ends her description of this evening by recalling Sidney Smith's idea of heaven: *paté de foie gras* eaten to the sound of trumpets. "Mine, that night this night, too," she writes, "is fresh garden peas, picked and shelled by my friends, to the sound of a cowbell" (667).

In this passage ostensibly about peas, Fisher has much to say about the heaven of having love and the hell of losing it. Writing some eight years after Parrish's death, Fisher sees beyond the "intoxication" of that moment she had so enjoyed, perfectly balanced between two cultures, when she and Parrish acted as hosts to her parents, who served as the foreigners. Fisher's writing about her life after Parrish's death never quite recaptures the idyllic tone pervading her descriptions of life with him during this time. Small wonder that she returns to it in her writing, striving to recapture what Kristeva calls "that fleeing eternity or that perpetual transience" that constitutes the happiness of a foreigner (4).

As the years pass, Fisher's writing paradoxically records both the dissolving of boundaries between home and abroad and her increasing awareness of the truth that, in Kristeva's words, "Nowhere is one *more* a foreigner than in France" (38). In her middle years, France became Fisher's refuge when life in the United States was unbearably painful; especially after personal tragedies, such as the deaths of her father in 1954 or her sister Anne in 1965, Fisher would return there. By the time

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of her third marriage, to publisher Donald Friede, and divorce, Fisher's writing career was well under way and she was free to go where she wanted. Sometimes with her two daughters or her sister, sometimes alone, she invariably went back to France, even though she was never able to stay permanently.

Two of Fisher's books—*Map of Another Town*, a memoir of her years spent in Aix-en-Provence, and *A Considerable Town*, a similar memoir of Marseille—are odes to French cities in the country of her heart. In both works, her descriptions of gastronomical experiences pay homage to the restaurants and cafes of these cities. Once more food, culture, and the events of her personal life intersect. An easy familiarity marks both of these accounts. Of Marseille, she writes

> I first spent a night there in late 1929, and since then I have returned even oftener than seems reasonable. Beginning in 1940, there were wars, both worldwide and intramural, and then I managed to regain my old rhythm. Each time I went back, I felt younger: a chronological miracle, certainly! (*CT* 9)

Such intimate knowledge is deeply comforting. "If I could be in only one part of it, I would go directly to the Old Port, and stay there," Fisher writes with assurance, "I would know exactly what to do and say and eat, and would feel as welcome as any shadow. It is very nice to feel like this" (*CT* 10). Her love of Aix seems more hard-won. "Here before me now is my picture, my map, of a place and therefore of myself," she writes, "and much that can never be said adds to its reality for me, just as much of its reality is based on my own shadows, my inventions" (*Map* 3). This internal map provides "a refuge from any sounds but its own, a harbor from any streets but its own"—a remarkable degree of intimacy, since Fisher also recalls feeling "very conscious for quite a time of being hopelessly and irrevocably an outlander, and most especially an American outlander" (*Map* 6, 63).

In a chapter called "The Foreigner," Fisher records her reactions to alienating events in Aix, and the devices she adopted to cope. In her account of the host-foreigner dynamic, Kristeva notes that for the foreigner, "Detestation tells you that you are an intruder, that you are irritating, and that this will be shown to you frankly and without caution" (14). Apparent "indifference is the foreigner's shield" against such cruelty;

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"insensitive, aloof, he seems, deep down, beyond the reach of attacks and rejections that he nevertheless experiences with the vulnerability of a medusa" (7). Fisher certainly attempted to remain aloof in this way, but she too never became immune to the "attacks and rejections" she encountered. Deeply stung, she developed her own ways of getting even, not the least of which was the publication of unflattering portraits of her enemies. Seldom self-pitying, such accounts usually end with Fisher having the upper hand—at least in print.

In *Map of Another Town*, for instance, she recalls comforting her ten-year-old daughter Anne, who came home from school upset because "a little girl whose father had been imprisoned when the Yanks occupied Aix said, "Ugh . . . I smell an American." Though she does admit "I probably do smell a little, because I haven't taken a bath in a tub for quite a while," Anne protests that "I don't smell because I am American. Dirty American girls smell just like dirty French girls" (64). Here a child's logic counters French prejudice. In other cases Fisher must develop her own responses to insults aimed at her nationality and career. Madame Lanes, her French landlady, would at times ask Fisher if she "objected to some delicious dish which she had ordered to please one of the other boarders." "I know you Americans don't care what you eat," she remarked laughing, "It always amazes me about how little you notice flavor and seasoning. You seem to have no definite tastes . . . only prejudices." The woman would then go on to extol the virtues of "her other more demanding and therefore more sensitive and worldly boarders," such as the Swiss, who must have "cream sauces with their meat," or the Swedes, who "would not tolerate garlic, olive oil, or even tomatoes." "No," Fisher raged silently, "No, we crude Yanks are too polite, too well taught, to demand Boston baked beans or tamales from a French hostess" (*Map* 64–65). In moments like these, Fisher is clearly coming to terms with the fact that her affinity for France required her to tolerate what she could not change about it—and what she refused to change in herself.

Nevertheless she has her revenge. While recalling that her "outward blandness with Madame Lanes became increasingly sweetened with a real affection and an understanding of her veiled mockery," in other cases Fisher was less forbearing:

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> occasionally in Aix I decided swiftly to wipe out this or that sneering person from my life and thoughts. It was as satisfying as discarding a rotten apricot from a bowl of fresh fruit, or lopping off a dead branch from a healthy tree. I had no personal feeling about either them or my ruthlessness; I did not care if they found me, the quiet perhaps colorless woman, unperceptive and oafish. I did care that I was thought to be so because I was an American . . . and when this was made plain in an ill-bred or stupid way, I simply eliminated the culprit. (*Map* 65)

A masterful example of this strategy occurs when old friends from Dijon have introduced Fisher to some prominent members of society in Aix. Ostensibly to give her opportunities to practice her French, the new acquaintances occasionally condescend to invite her to lunch, but after a couple of brutally unpleasant meals, Fisher "came to believe, almost frantically, that my hostess had hated my old friends in Dijon . . . and that now she was avenging herself on me." Fisher takes her own revenge by proceeding to skewer her hosts in print. The Colonel, for instance, was "very senile, and unbelievably obscene in a quiet way which he knew nobody but me could hear": "Now and then he would glance slyly at me through his crumbs and driblets and murmur an invitation straight from the walls of Pompeii, and then chuckle as he popped a whole chestnut tart into his sagging mouth." The hostess is a shrill social tyrant. "Tell me," she would shriek, "explain to all of us, how one can dare to call herself a writer on gastronomy in the United States, where, from everything we hear, gastronomy does not yet exist?" The needling continues after lunch. "And now," she demands "we have eaten this little French luncheon, so simple but so typical of our national *cuisine*, tell us just how you managed to invent such profitable fiction about one of the sciences, when even Brillat-Savarin could not! We await your dictum!" At that moment, the entire audience "would lean forward obediently at her signal, the two girls stunned with food and fear, the Englishwoman rigid with snobbish inferiority. The Colonel would belch and finger his fly under his spotted napkin." As for Fisher, "I would stiffen my mask and steady my voice behind it, firm in my ruthless decision: I would never speak anything but a civil good day to this person again." But

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Fisher doesn't simply ignore her hostess and decline future invitations. She takes action:

> The next day I sent her a huge box, shaped like a coffin woven of reeds and twigs, filled with the most beautiful flowers I could find in Aix, fresh from the gardens of Nice. It was my private funeral piece for her.
>
> All this was good for me. It made me accustom myself to acceptance of my slow evolution as an invisible thing, a ghost. The art of silent anger strengthened me, and as it changed to tolerance I felt even stronger.
>
> The catharsis of pain, I reassured myself sententiously: it is purifying me with all the anger and exasperation, and it does not make loneliness intolerable, but rather betters it. . . . Inside my growing ability to be alone would protect me and keep me from being arrogant.
>
> This certitude has, ever since, been of great comfort to me in thin moments. (*Map* 66–68)

In recorded scenes like these, Fisher confirms Kristeva's notion that the foreigner has the "ability to reveal the crudest aspects of human relationships when seduction fades out and proprieties give way before the results of confrontations" (7). Sending flowers not only signifies the demise of her affiliation with the group, but also marks her acceptance of herself as perpetually "other," as one who need not fit in to be satisfied with herself.

Fisher often refers to herself as "invisible" and "a ghost" in her later works, acknowledging the security she felt in her "otherness" as she wandered through foreign places. The "shy" or "stupid" person in her early description is now a woman secure in her behavior and opinions, asserting her own view from behind her mask of aloofness, showing little regard for what others think. Take, for example, her account of a christening at St. Sauveur, from *Map of Another Town*. The priest was "fat," "careless," and "dirty," and he "held the new child as if it were a distastefully cold omelet that might stick on his fingers" (9). After silently observing the ceremony, Fisher notes that "I made myself disappear. This is something that takes practice. . . . It is mainly a question of withdrawing to the vanishing point from the consciousness of the people one is with, before one actually leaves" (10). This ability to assess a moment, by being in it but not necessarily part of it, and to withdraw from it at will, suggests that Fisher has achieved the

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foreigner's "self-confidence of being, of being able to settle within the self with a smooth, opaque certainty" which Kristeva compares to "an oyster shut under the flooding tide or the expressionless joy of warm stones." Further, Fisher displays that kind of "neutral wisdom" Kristeva identifies with the outsider: "Between the two pathetic shores of courage and humiliation, against which he is tossed by the clashes of others, the foreigner persists, anchored in himself, strengthened by . . . a secret working-out" (8). Fisher could derive great pleasure from her adventures as a spectral presence, whether during those early days in Paris, "wrapped in a passionate mist," or on one of her last train trips with Parrish, when the two of them, "very live ghosts" indeed, "drank and ate and saw and felt and made love better than ever before, with an intensity that seemed to detach us utterly from life" (*GM* 528–9), or even when living as a ghost during her middle years in Aix and Marseille, coming to terms with occasional hostility but making herself at home anyway. Fisher's account of her developing ability to cope with the other as the other while still clinging tenaciously to her own cosmopolitan lifestyle represents her triumph.

In a key passage from *Strangers to Ourselves*, Kristeva describes both the challenges that M. F. K. Fisher confronted and the questions she found herself asking:

> Living with the other, with the foreigner confronts us with the possibility or not of *being* an other. It is not simply—humanistically—a matter of our being able to accept the other, but of *being in his place*, and this means to imagine and make oneself other for oneself. . . . Split identity, kaleidoscope of identities: can we be a saga for ourselves without being considered mad or fake? Without dying of the foreigner's hatred or of hatred for the foreigner? (8)

A close reading of those works which together constitute M. F. K. Fisher's culinary autobiography suggests that she would have answered both questions in the affirmative. Roland Barthes has asserted that food "sums up and transmits a situation," and Fisher's writing reveals the truth of this proposition as well. Her writing about food is undeniably writing about her life and the many kinds of hunger which consume her. The hunger for assimilation and for recognition as an "other" with discerning tastes. The hunger for love and happiness. And as

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she herself would be quick to point out, the physical hunger for food—good food—which can in turn signify all of the above. "There is a communion of more than our bodies when bread is broken and wine drunk," she once wrote, "And that is my answer, when people ask me: Why do you write about hunger, and not wars or love" (*GM* 353).

NOTES

1. Kristeva describes the characteristics of the foreigner, including aloofness, masks, suffering, and ebullience, among others, in the chapter "Toccata and Fugue for the Foreigner" (1–40).
2. In the letter to Powell, Fisher laments leaving Al, whom she still professes to love, but details her disgust with his sexual frustrations and his rejection of her: "it took me a long time to get used to living side by side with a man whom I still loved passionately and who was almost actively sickened at the thought of being with me" (170).
3. Barr describes Parrish, who was fourteen years older than M. F. K. Fisher, as a man of "worldliness, deep sensitivity, and compassion," noting, "I am confident that it was he who helped Mary Frances begin to focus on her gift for writing" (x).
4. Fisher emphasizes their wonder at the soil's richness and describes the hold it had on their lives, as they worked with it daily. The emotional and psychological changes were underscored by physical ones. For example, one evening after many days of hard work at Le Pâquis, she and Al dress to go into town for dinner. "I was much too thin and much too brown for the dress I wanted to wear, and high heels felt strange on my feet," she observes, "I felt more beautiful than possible" (*Gastronomical Me* 486).
5. Fisher and Chexbres "knew all the time," however, that their compatriot "was indeed in bed, but not alone and certainly not in need of hot bottles, liniments, or our sympathies to keep warm" (490).

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God Bless Kitty Kelley, Or, Biography High and Low

Carl Rollyson

I distrust Great Men. They produce a desert of uniformity around them and often a pool of blood too, and I always feel a little man's pleasure when they come a cropper.

—E. M. Forster

I belong to a group of biographers based in New York City. We call ourselves "The Biography Seminar." We meet once a month on the NYU campus, listen to an invited speaker—usually someone who has just published a biography—ask questions, offer comments, and share information. Then we adjourn for dinner and more discussion.

For a biographer, the seminar is heaven. I've written five biographies and am beginning a sixth. I have also published the first annotated bibliography of writing about biography. In the seminar, I've had the opportunity to learn from and submit my work to distinguished biographers. Regardless of the month's topic, the seminar constitutes a continuous dialogue about the genre and about where biographers think they are headed.

Last year we had an unusual meeting, an open forum. In the midst of a wide-open discussion that touched on Janet Malcolm's recent attack on biographers in *The Silent Woman*, I hazarded the observation that I saw little difference between what might be called the high and low of biography, between Richard Ellmann and Kitty Kelley, for example.

I was attacked on all sides. One seminar member thought I might be joking, deliberately provoking outrage by overstating

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the case. Actually I was serious, and my friends should not have been so shocked. I have been calling myself an outlaw biographer for years, and I was simply generalizing from my own experience in order to say "All biographers are outlaws."

The only scandalous thing about my statement was that I had never read a Kitty Kelley biography. I felt I did not need to. I maintained that while biographies might differ in degree, they were all of a kind. Whether literary, historical, celebrity, authorized, or unauthorized, biography is one—and no matter what you call it, it is the work of a scoundrel.

Before writing my next sentence I looked up the word scoundrel in the *American Heritage Dictionary*. The definition was to the point: "A villain." That word, as we all know, is associated with wickedness and evil, and there is something demonic about biography. After all, the biographer is taking possession of another's soul. Kitty Kelley has become notorious only because she goes after her subjects with such relish. "It takes a real pushy pants to do it," she observed to an interviewer. She has riled not only her subjects but also her fellow biographers, even provoking George Carpozi, Jr. to write a muckraking biography of her. She is the shame of the genre, the biographer's scourge. At least this is how the biographers I know react to her.

Recently I actually read a Kitty Kelley biography. I chose *His Way: The Unauthorized Biography of Frank Sinatra*, the only book of hers to receive significant critical praise—from William Safire in *The New York Times*, from Jonathan Yardley in *The Washington Post*, and from Steve Weinberg in his excellent book, *Telling the Untold Story: How Investigative Reporters Are Changing the Craft of Biography*. Though the Sinatra biography received mostly bad notices and was lumped together with her other work, I thought it only fair to judge her by what was probably her best effort.

I found her biography impressive, especially when she lets the voices of the people she interviewed dominate scene after scene. There is very little narrative voice in Kitty Kelley, and what is there is quite pedestrian, even incompetent. She writes, for instance, of "one New Year's eve in 1945"—how many were there that year? She has Frankie spewing "hateful venom" at the press—nice to know that there must be a benign form of poison. One controversy rages "like a fire in an oil well, stopping

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only when it ran dry." Such sentences reveal that Kitty has feeble powers of analysis—and note that like many biographers I am already on a first name basis with my subject.

But it is the people she talks to who matter, the people who answer her questions and have stories to tell. They have wonderful stories, most of them filled with what is commonly called dirt. That is what I like about Kitty: she serves up the raw data. It does not get blended into a bland, all-wise, all-knowing narrative voice. Instead you get a sense of all the people she interviewed. Some of them are exaggerating, some are lying, and some are trying to tell the truth. Their testimony forms patterns: it seems undeniable, for instance, that Sinatra's spoiled boy's arrogance turns vicious once he has power and money. This is the story that Kitty wants to tell. It is true that she has very little to say about the great voice or Sinatra's art. So what? Other biographers can tackle that. Evil is what Kitty is best equipped to provide, because, I suspect, she is evil, and it takes one to know one. I don't think I'm quite enough of an outlaw to take on a Sinatra—although Kitty's moxie is inspiring.

In Kitty's hands, biography is an antiheroic genre, which is why she makes so many people mad, and also why she is so popular. The only thing that excites readers as much as an uplifting story is one about a great fall. Beginning as elegy, panegyric, and hagiography, it has taken several centuries to bring biography back to earth, and God bless Kitty Kelley for still trying. She refuses to blink at the fact that biographers are bringers of bad news, the messengers that are often shot. Haven't you noticed the animus which so often animates the reviews of contemporary biographies, or how reviewers such as Joyce Carol Oates try to hide theirs by using terms such as "pathography" to denigrate the biographer's interest in dirt and disease?

Kitty has been accused of many things. Here are the charges.

A Bill of Indictment of Kitty Kelley, for Crimes Against Biography

Article 1.

She fabricates quotations to make the stories sound better.

Thucydides did that too.

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Article 2.

She says she interviewed people who say she didn't.

Well, Kitty does seem to stretch things. She counts it as an interview when people say "No, I won't talk to you." Sometimes they say, "I won't talk to you because . . ." Now judging by my own experience, that kind of reply might actually yield an important bit of information.

Article 3.

She is sneaky. She goes along with photographers on their shoots and casually insinuates herself into conversations.

Not nice, I grant you. But I give Kitty points for her resourcefulness.

Article 4.

She pretends she is the authorized biographer of her subjects.

If any interviewees believe that, they deserve what they get. Anyway, I hate authorized biography. Who could possibly have the right to authorize the appropriation of another's life?

Article 5.

She pretends she is on the interviewee's side. Her sympathetic persona gets people to relax and say more than they intended to.

Every good reporter does that, as Janet Malcolm says, and she would also pretty much agree with Frankie that the press—and biographers too—are slime. And why shouldn't Frankie be mad that someone—anyone—should write up his life? How can they possibly know him as well as he knows himself? Frankie, you have a point. It's just that you miss what you can't see, what no biographical subject can see: precisely those sides of yourself invisible to you but so obvious to other people—and to your biographers.

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Article 6.

She does not check out her sources. She goes with stories because they are sensational, not necessarily because they are true.

I suspect that Kitty is guilty as charged. But not all stories can be confirmed, or at any rate not at the time the biographer is on the job. If the biographer presents a narrative made up almost exclusively of stories identified as coming from individual voices, I believe she is entitled to go with what she's got, and especially if—as in Sinatra's case—the stories fit a pattern. Other biographers can correct Kitty. The best reply to one biography of Frank Sinatra is another biography of Frank Sinatra.

Article 7.

She is intolerably invasive. She supposedly had her husband root through Elizabeth Taylor's garbage cans.

This only proves my point that biography is an unsanitary occupation. There is no such thing as stooping too low for evidence. A visitor once asked William Faulkner if he could retrieve from the wastebasket a few pages the novelist had just discarded, and Faulkner graciously granted the request. No less than celebrity biographers, or any other kind, literary biographers are on garbage detail. It might smell better in university archives, but my hands still get pretty filthy by the end of the day. You may think the gloves they give you at Boston University's Mugar Memorial Library are for preserving their documents, but actually they are protecting you from their dirt.

* * * * *

Kitty's sins may put her at the low end of biography. My point is that literary biographers are busy practicing genteel versions of her stratagems at the high end—if you think literary biography is a high. Such biographers, if they have any style at all, are confecting a narrative out of voices and letters and documents of many kinds. The result is obviously a construct, a kind of fiction, which like a novel can tell the truth, or aspects of the truth, but which is obviously not the life itself.

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But then nothing is the life itself—not even what Frankie lives minute by minute. He took his confections to market, and thus inevitably raised our curiosity about the confectioner. This is why we need many biographies of the same subject, because biographers' motivations and their subjects' are always mixed. No life is purely apprehended, and without purity, there is evil, corruption.

Biographers shy away from this conclusion. They do not want to feel tainted. They want to feel noble, that they rescue, rehabilitate, or burnish the reputations of great figures. They often admire their subjects—but they do not need to. Indeed, admiration would sometimes get in the way, and at other times is impossible. Hitler? Stalin? Though these two did have their admirers, biography should not be the haunt of hagiographers. That job is always open to Frankie's lackeys.

Not every biography needs to be muckraking. I myself have never written an exposé. But I'm conscious that I'm exposing parts of my subjects that they would just as soon see covered. I sympathize with their nakedness. I acknowledge their right to protest. But I won't stop. And I breathe easier, knowing that Kitty is out there beating the bushes, making it easier for me—and for all biographers.

Biographers are only just beginning to be as reckless and dynamic as the greatest novelists, only just beginning to exercise some of the creative freedom that novelists have taken for granted. The biggest mistake we could make is to cut ourselves off from Kitty—or from Janet, for that matter. Let us admit, let us even glory in the evil problematics of our genre, the better to understand and to enrich it.

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Reviews

Greg Dening, *The Death of William Gooch: A History's Anthropology*. Honolulu: U of Hawai'i P, 1995. x + 191 pp. Maps, photos, illustrations, notes, index. $20.00, ISBN 0-8248-1754-0.

The volume under review is a reissue of Greg Dening's *History's Anthropology: The Death of William Gooch*, published in 1988 by the Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania. Earlier critics gave this book a very warm reception; it still deserves one and so I will give it one, too. The story Dening has to tell us about the making and writing of history may not be as striking or as fresh as it was almost a decade ago, but readers unfamiliar with the earlier edition will still welcome his reflections on ethnographic history and his tale of self-conscious encounter with the life of William Gooch, an astronomer on the supply ship *Daedalus* who was fated to be murdered in Hawai'i near the beach at Waimea, O'ahu, in 1792, at the age of 21. Dening's key points—that we are always making history through our crafted stories and that we have different crafted stories for different occasions—endure as practical reminders about the character of social life and about the historian's relationship to the past. At the same time, his cultural history of entangled Hawaiian and English lives is personal, absorbing, and vastly revealing of histories made and histories in the making.

Dening shares with anthropologist Marshall Sahlins an interest in the historical conjuncture of Stranger and Native on Hawaiian shores in the 18th and 19th centuries. In their respective works, Sahlins is inclined to bold theoretical arguments about structure and practice, Dening to constructivist aphorisms and admonitions, fine-grained portraiture, and lyrical reflections on history. While both attend to cultural, and thus positioned, understandings of fatal events—for Sahlins, the deaths of Cook and the Hawaiian god Lono; for Dening, the death of Gooch—Dening evinces a desire to get at the dramas of experience, and to know what may have led Gooch to be killed at Waimea. Because of his self-conscious pursuit of Gooch's social milieu and tragic fate, Dening's work reminds me of *Young Men and Fire*, Norman MacLean's very moving book about the 1947 Montana wildfire that took the lives of thirteen smokejumpers. Both are wonderful works about our engagement with the past and about the limits to our knowing history and the moment of another's death.

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In turning the title around for this reissue, Dening and the University of Hawai'i Press may have wanted to beckon a wider, more general audience for the book. I hope that happens. Yet placed to the fore in the title, Gooch still does not serve as the focus of the book's reflections, but rather, as their anchor to time, place, and cultural encounter. Dening is alert to the different stories about Gooch that are recollected or preserved in letters, ships' logs, and oral histories, and wants to instruct us on the dilemmas and insights they offer for the general project of writing history. But conjured to occasion a lesson in history writing and history making, the figure of Gooch remains strangely elusive in these pages. Dening should not be faulted for the scant record on Gooch; in fact, the historian's detective work was superb and turned up a small bundle of Gooch's letters dating from the young man's years at Cambridge University. The letters, however, don't give readers enough for a broad and sure sense of Gooch, and so Dening instead treats us to a fascinating portrait of Cambridge student life in the late 18th century. Readers are then called upon to imagine what might have shaped Gooch's life before he signed on to become astronomer aboard the *Daedalus*. I nevertheless came away from the book with little feel for Gooch, save for his months aboard the supply ship, where a drama of command, memory, glory-seeking, intrigue, frustration, and misunderstanding takes place between captain, officers, and crew. It is not biographical portraiture but instead a cultural history of Cambridge that succeeds so powerfully and so well in this book, and which so dominates it. And for me, the lavish attention given to Cambridge disappointingly overshadows Dening's probing look at Hawaiian politics and culture at the moment Gooch stepped onto the beach at Waimea.

Mindful that I am reviewing this book for a journal devoted to biography, I enthusiastically recommend *The Death of William Gooch* as a provocative and meditative interdisciplinary work that will inspire biographers to reflect on their craft. I suspect some will decide that the book is not a satisfying biography's anthropology, in that Gooch remains an obscure figure in the work. But I think all will be greatly enriched by Dening's reflections and by his effort to tell a story about making history on Pacific, European, and American shores.

Kenneth M. George

Lawrence Graver, *An Obsession with Anne Frank: Meyer Levin and the Diary*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 1995. 254 pp. $28.00, ISBN 0-520-20124-8.

Meyer Levin, the author of *The Old Bunch* (1937), *Compulsion* (1955), *The Fanatic* (1964), *The Obsession* (1973), and numerous other works of

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fiction and non-fictional prose, was a well known and widely read American writer of the postwar period. Today, he is remembered, if at all, less for his own books, most of which are out of print, than for his lengthy and disputatious involvement with Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl*. It is Levin's passionate connection to the famous diary that is the center of Lawrence Graver's attention in the book under review here.

Levin was one of the early readers of the diary in its French translation and was instrumental in bringing it to the attention of American readers through a prominent review he wrote for the *New York Times Book Review* and articles he placed elsewhere. He took it upon himself to serve as an intermediary for Otto Frank, the father of the diarist, with American publishers (most of whom rejected the book); persuaded Otto Frank that a stage version of the diary would bring it to the attention of a wider audience; and set about himself to write such a piece for the popular theater, only to have it turned down by a series of potential producers (the extremely successful Goodrich and Hackett version later proved Levin right). This rejection had a radically destabilizing effect on his sense of himself as a writer and a Jew and propelled him to wage a thirty year fight in defense of his play and the memory of the murdered Jewish girl that it enshrined. During this long and bitter campaign, he fought with countless people—in addition to Otto Frank, these included numerous producers, lawyers, agents, journalists and other writers, and assorted friends—in an obsessive and largely fruitless effort to have his version of Anne Frank's diary brought before the public. He saw himself as the victim of a vicious conspiracy, organized by Lillian Hellman and others on the left and directed not only against himself but more broadly against Jewish interests in general and political Zionism in particular. In fighting back against his "enemies," he launched public campaigns in support of his play, enlisted the aid of hundreds of American rabbis and "friends of the theater," and time and again became embroiled in complex litigation. Through these and related activities, he did serious damage to his writing career, and more grievously, drove himself to the edge of insanity, extravagantly comparing his situation as a marginalized writer to the oppression of the Jews under Hitler. To Brooks Atkinson, he declared that "his play had been 'killed by the same arbitrary disregard that brought an end to Anne and six million others.'" Continuing in this same overheated vein, he further charged, no doubt with Otto Frank in mind, that "there is, among the survivors, a compulsion to visit on others something of the evil that was visited on them" (99). Under the spell of a persistent persecution-mania, he saw himself as the targeted prey of this retribution. Once, in a moment of wildness, he even cried out to his wife, "'If you really love me, you will take a gun and kill Otto Frank'" (220).

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In chronicling such extreme, self-defeating behavior over the course of three decades, Lawrence Graver has written not so much a biography of Meyer Levin as an exhaustive study of Levin's "long, bruising involvement with the *Diary of a Young Girl*" (153). In telling this story, Graver set himself the following four goals:

> (1) to provide a thorough narrative of a controversy that up to now has been inadequately and misleadingly described, either by the participants or by onlookers who had only a sketchy idea of what was happening and what was at stake; (2) to explore the effect of the prolonged dispute on the life and career of a neglected but important writer; (3) to shed light on evolving American attitudes towards Jews in the 1950s and afterwards; and (4) to reflect on the continually vexed issue of how people bear witness to and represent the Holocaust. (xvi)

In his detailed and highly readable exposition of the history and character of Levin's obsession, Graver has succeeded admirably in meeting the first two of his book's aims. As will be pointed out below, however, he does not substantially engage the kinds of issues that belong to the latter two goals, and as a consequence his book, while valuable, makes a more limited contribution than it might have made.

Drawing on printed sources as well as on unpublished material in major archives in this country and the Netherlands, Graver has produced a full-scale narrative of Levin's turbulent involvement with Anne Frank's diary and those who brought it to the public in both its book and dramatic versions. Meyer Levin emerges in Graver's pages as a driven, combative individual, cranky and often unpredictable, but not altogether without a case for his side of this tortuous story. Indeed, while leaving no doubt about the obviously compulsive, self-destructive side of his author's personality, Graver also demonstrates Levin's writerly intelligence, dedication, and gifts, and finds merit in his unpublished and seldom performed play, seeing it as being in some ways "closer to Anne Frank's book, more successful in capturing the singularity of the young girl and the political and religious issues raised by her predicament, than the Goodrich and Hackett version" (118). He describes the several different adaptations of Anne Frank's diary that Levin produced over the years for both radio and the theater (no single, definitive version of his play survives), places these writings helpfully within the larger context of Levin's published work, and offers an assessment of the author that renders him a noteworthy, if not truly important, writer in his day. In addition, Graver presents a deft account of Levin's turbulent relationship with Otto Frank and reports at length on his many feuds with other people in and out of the theater. Some of these feuds went on for years and were prompted

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by Levin's charges that a cabal of conspirators was determined to transform Anne Frank's image from a specifically Jewish one to a generalized or universalized one and thereby misrepresent the fundamental meaning of her testimony. (History has proven him more right than wrong in this respect, even if it has not produced evidence that such a transformation was the work of an organized group of conspirators.) Levin also insisted irately that his own dramatization of her book had been plagiarized by Goodrich and Hackett, the authors of the popular stage version of the diary, and he waged a series of legal battles in support of his claim. Graver sorts through these entanglements with great care and offers an analysis of them that constitutes a clear and judiciously drawn reconstruction of the nature of Meyer Levin's thirty-year obsession with Anne Frank. In all of these respects, Graver's book is solid and clarifying.

He is less convincing in pointing up the cultural consequences of Levin's prolonged and impassioned involvement with the diary. One comes away from a reading of *An Obsession with Anne Frank,* in fact, knowing a good deal about the feverish side of Meyer Levin, but it is not at all clear how Levin's eccentricities exemplify anything other than themselves. Unfortunately, Graver's larger project of having his story serve as an inquiry into questions of Holocaust representations rarely extends beyond inference and intermittent speculation. Given the nature of his study, the author is obviously not uninterested in questions of literary and historical representation, but he fails to develop a useful theoretical or conceptual framework within which to raise such questions; nor does he draw significantly on the work of other scholars who have dealt with some of these same issues at length. Consequently, the reader is left wondering whether Meyer Levin's Holocaust obsession, which Graver succeeds in making graphic, is merely idiosyncratic or illustrative of some larger trend within postwar American culture, or perhaps within a specific strain of American Jewish culture. Were there other contemporary American writers, for instance, who shared Levin's particularistic passions about how the Nazi destruction of European Jewry was being represented to American audiences? If so, one learns nothing about them from this book. Nor does one learn much about how Levin's understanding of the Holocaust agreed with or departed from the public views of the Jewish catastrophe taken by the major American Jewish agencies and institutions of the day. As it happens, most of Levin's antagonists were themselves Jews, but Graver does little more than gesture in the direction of the ideological differences that characterized the Jewish cultural wars of the postwar era, and he does not attempt to provide anything like a serious exposition of this important aspect of his subject. The general absence of a broader address to questions of this sort tends to limit *An Obsession with Anne Frank* and renders the book

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more a study of individual fixation, of the compulsive drives that enflamed and consumed Meyer Levin, than one of significantly larger biographical and cultural dimension.

Alvin H. Rosenfeld

Terry Keefe and Edmund Smyth, *Autobiography and the Existential Self: Studies in Modern French Writing*. New York: St. Martin's, 1995. 206 pp. $35.00, ISBN 0-312-12593-3.

We are drawn to autobiographical and intimate writings (for example, letters and diaries) in the hope of catching their authors in the act of revealing their real/existential selves. After reading *Autobiography and the Existential Self*, we realize that this hope is rarely, if ever, met. The self portrayed in autobiographical and intimate writings is as constructed as the self of the public persona. Though this point is made throughout this anthology, neither the authors nor the editors allow it to challenge their basic assumption—an existential self, a self that is spontaneous rather than constructed, fragmented rather than singular, and multiple rather than unified, exists and can be used to discern the degree to which the self given to us by an author is existentially lived or artfully constructed.

This commitment to the idea of an existential self, and to the distinction between an existential and an essential self, is not, however, supported by an analysis of arguments or texts. Neither is it required by the project of the anthology, for though Edmund Smyth's Introduction tells us that the volume is centered on the writings of Sartre and Beauvoir, Terry Keefe's Conclusion claims that the essays in the collection are only loosely linked with the French existentialist thought of the 40s. Given the divergent claims of the Introduction and the Conclusion, the point of bringing these particular essays together is unclear. Further, the effect of uncritically adopting the dualist paradigm of an existential versus a constructed self is to position existentialism as the mean between the extremes of ontological essentialism and Postmodern constructivism. Existentialism thus emerges as the philosophy of common sense. Whether this taming of existentialism's challenge to the familiar categories of the bourgeois world is an example of the processes Marcuse described in *One Dimensional Man*, or a consequence of uncritically adopting the early Sartrean concept of the self, the effect is the same: a thinking that was once (and still has the potential to be) provocative is rendered banal.

Whatever the claims and counterclaims of the introduction and the conclusion, the organization of the anthology into a Part I that

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deals with Sartre and Beauvoir, and a Part II that deals with those who at one time or another were a part of their circle, invites us to read the collection as centered on Sartre and Beauvoir. The essays in Part I raise several interesting questions regarding the relationship between author and text, text and audience, and the writing, written, and lived self. In "The War Diary as Autobiography: Sartre 1939–40," Michael Scriven introduces us to the distinction between the existential self and the constructed ego by analyzing the differences between the existential self's spontaneous deconstructive writing (*Les Carnets*) and the ego's totalized and stabilizing writing (*Les Mots*). Scriven attributes these differences to questions of audience and age. *Les Carnets*, he tells us, is the work of a younger man in transition who is writing for himself, in order to catch himself in the act of transformation. *Les Mots*, Scriven says, is the work of an older man writing for an audience and concerned to preserve a specific representation of himself for posterity. Edmund Smyth reads *Les Mots* differently. He claims that it disrupts the teleology of the narrative and reveals Sartre's existential self as a composite of texts, voices, and words. For Smyth, writing for the other does not lure an aging Sartre to bad faith. Whatever their differences, however, Scriven and Keefe agree, the existential self can be written.

Other contributors to the volume are not so sure. Terry Keefe's and Emma Wilson's essays, for example, claim that Beauvoir always wrote with Sartre in mind and that as the object of the gaze, she never reveals her existential self. The difference between Sartre's and Beauvoir's ability to write the existential self becomes quite striking if we take Benedict O'Donohoe's "Orphan Playwright" essay into account. In detailing Sartre's refusal of the father, O'Donohoe inadvertently reveals the arrogance of the Sartrean existential subject. Reading O'Donohoe we discover that the subject who eludes the look and writes the existential self is the subject who repudiates his debts to the father (and mother).

Leaving Sartre and Beauvoir, the essays in Part II introduce us to their circle of friends, admirers, and critics. Here the idea of autobiography as a unifying thread is stretched thin, as the idea of an existential self is both preserved and challenged. Nizam, we are told, wrote no autobiographies but revealed his existential self in his actions. Camus, it is said, deliberately concealed his troubled existential self out of a sense of duty to the fragile possibilities of political hope. Leduc's obsessive autobiographies, written as a gift to Beauvoir, are said to reveal the solitary but not the existential self. Genet's autobiographical prose, we are told, repudiates the notion of an existential self, and Guibert's failed attempt to capture the dying existential self on film is said to initiate a new autobiographical genre —the existential thanatography.

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All told, the anthology leaves us with questions, doubts, and a few observations. There is the question Mary Orr raises in her essay on Nizam regarding the privilege accorded to the existential I and the relationship between this I (rarely, if ever, encountered) and the autonomous subject, the construct of bourgeois humanism. There is the question Terry Keefe raises regarding the reliability of the distinction between the public and private persona. There is the question raised in several of the essays regarding the relationship between sex, gender, writing, and the existential self. With regard to these last questions, it is striking that of the three figures who situate themselves before the gaze of the other—Beauvoir, Leduc, and Genet—only the man, Genet, challenges the right of the other to establish his identity. Only the man writes to resist the identity bestowed upon him by the other. Only the man insists on his autonomy. The women write for and to the other. For them, the very project of writing is entangled with the presence of the other. For them, writing necessarily refers to readers, and the impetus to write is an expression of their desire to recognize and gift a singularly privileged other. Relying on the early work of Sartre, we might be tempted to accuse the women but not the men of bad faith. Stepping back from an uncritical acceptance of Sartre's early work, we might be tempted to pursue these observations regarding the positions of these female writers for what they suggest regarding the possibilities of the situated self, a self that exchanges the either/or logic of the lived versus the constructed self for the logic of the gift and the lived relationship to the other.

Debra B. Bergoffen

Richard Landes, *Relics, Apocalypse, and the Deceits of History: Ademar of Chabannes, 989–1034*. Harvard Historical Studies 117. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1995. 404 pp. ISBN 0-674-75530-8.

Given the imminence of a new millennium, a study devoted to the life and works of a figure who was in many respects prominent at the inception of the one currently drawing to a close is timely. Indeed, as one reads Richard Landes' splendid new biography of Ademar of Chabannes, the social and ideological anxieties and conflicts that have thus far arisen during the current millennial transition, though vastly accelerated compared to those of ten centuries ago, are not infrequently brought to mind by Landes' vivid and unsettling accounts of the shock waves that rippled vigorously, though in slower motion, through Christendom around the year 1000. Then as now, in fact, one significant way of responding to crisis could involve recourse to virtual reality in order to create elaborate scenarios of temporal change.

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Although Ademar of Chabannes had no access to cyberspace, he found a satisfactory counterpart in the scriptorium, a locus where he could program tendentious revisions of the past and virtualize futures of his own devising.

Who, then, was this wizard of scribal infra- and hypertextuality? In its overall morphology, the career of Ademar of Chabannes offers few hints of the depths to which it was ultimately shaken by the seismic upheavals of the age. Born during the late tenth century of northern Limousin nobility, Ademar was educated in the traditional arts of *clergie* at the monastery of Saint-Cybard in Angoulême. Eventually he had the opportunity to employ his remarkable talents as a grammarian, artist, and composer at Saint-Martial in Limoges, then one of Europe's most intellectually vibrant monastic centers. Following a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, he died in Jerusalem in 1034. To the casual observer, there is nothing particularly unusual about this scholastic *vita;* it follows the not uncommon pattern of a monastic vocation whose conventions of exemplarity are replicated often enough in the lives of many of Ademar's contemporaries. Across the centuries, moreover, this relatively uncomplicated view of Ademar's career prevailed. In the substantial corpus of his known works—among them a history of the abbots of Saint-Martial, a more general *Historia* of contemporary Christendom, a large assortment of scribal transcriptions in his hand, and many different types of ecclesiastical and historical writings of his own—the scattered evidence of Ademar's audacious scriptorial manipulations of history long remained unnoticed.

It was not until early in this century that the scandals lurking in Ademar's corpus even began to be uncovered: four articles published by Louis Saltet between 1925 and 1931, in the *Bulletin de la litterature ecclesiastique,* limned the disturbing portrait of a mendacious historian and unscrupulous forger. No doubt because of the profoundly revisionary implications of Saltet's findings, however, his contributions failed to alter in any definitive way the traditional view of Ademar that still persisted when Richard Landes undertook to explore the matter fully. Landes' book is the culmination of a project that since 1983 has also produced a dozen important articles and the Princeton Ph.D. dissertation of 1984, "The Making of a Medieval Historian: Ademar of Chabannes and Aquitaine at the Turn of the Millennium." These studies provide a corrective reconstruction of Ademar's life, establish a more adequate inventory of his writings, and fully unearth the explosive elements in certain of these texts, as well as the probable circumstances that conditioned their creation.

As Landes peels away the archaic camouflage of the standard biography, he gradually unmasks the underlying visage of the virtualizer of fictive worlds, and identifies his successive fabrications

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and forgeries. In 1029, not without considerable self-interest in finding a prestigious niche at the monastery in Limoges, Ademar assumed key roles in the fraudulent transformation of Saint Martial from the status of confessor to that of Apostle of Christ. This ambitious project "called for a massive rewriting of the liturgical books, including the correction of those passages in other codices where Martial appeared as a lowly confessor" (207). With the zeal of a convert, Ademar turned his scriptorial talents to the monumental and extremely delicate task of providing a plausibly revised *vita* for the saint, as well as a new, apostolic liturgy capable of "delegitimating" the old confessorial counterpart. To create an apostolic version of Martial's biography, the *Vita Prolixior,* Ademar "replaced all mentions of *confessor* or *Praesul* with *apostolus* . . . emphasized Martial's personal ties with Jesus, thus shifting his discipleship directly to the Lord himself and redefining his relationship with Peter as one of companion and equal . . . [and] expanded the scope of Martial's mission to include all of Gaul" (217). To obviate discrepancies between texts, certain of the monks collaborating with him "'corrected' the manuscripts in the monastery to accord with their new claims" (223). From these and countless other major and minor modifications developed a remarkable kind of intertextual synergy: "The result of these manipulations is that, at a level of sophistication that has swayed modern critical historians, each text gives verisimilitude to the other" (222). Thus during the early months of his *annus mirabilis,* 1029, Ademar "was the very definition of an 'impresario of the relic cults,' a highly literate man, full of critical sense and discrimination, a choreographer, a score writer, a producer" (225).

Yet on August 3, 1029, the very day the new cult was scheduled for solemn consecration, the scheme all but collapsed in a dramatic reversal. A Lombard prior named Benedict of Chiusa delivered a vociferous, withering denunciation of the apostolic scheme and openly debated the issue with Ademar. At dawn the following day, publicly disgraced and dejected, Ademar returned to Angoulême. (One recalls that the Modern French verb "limoger" means "to demote," in the figurative sense of reassigning someone *to* Limoges, that is, to a marginal post. That verb would not have been altogether inappropriate to describe what befell Ademar that day, though with the opposite sense of egress *from* Limoges, thus making the first "limogeage" on record more of an "angoulêmage"!)

Ademar spent most of his remaining days in the cloistral obscurity of the scriptorium at Saint-Cybard, but not without concocting multiple responses to his colossal humiliation. Landes shows how the failure of the apostolic scheme marked "the turning point between a career in which forgery had served a community, to one in which it now served his personal needs [as] Ademar began to turn in on himself" (231). Suddenly transformed from the ardent defender of a

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magnificent collective fiction into an embittered, deeply disturbed recluse, Ademar first addressed to his influential contemporaries a self-justificatory "circular letter" laced with venomous evocations of Benedict and paranoid anticipations of papal wrath. Such feverish ranting ensured the failure of this propagandistic venture, thus prompting him to embark on a fresh, more desperate binge of writing—"well over half of Ademar's surviving manuscript corpus was written in the last four years of his productive life (1029–1033)" (253). He now recurred to the creation of "future history," using more deviously subtle tactics whose powerful effects would be deferred well beyond his own lifetime. He addressed to posterity a series of clever forgeries that would ensure the longevity both of Martial's apostleship and the authority of his own documentation of this "verity." These include a bogus papal letter and accounts of two Peace councils of the Aquitainian church, all offering full support of Martial's apostolicity. He carefully devised "time capsules" to ensure the future reception of these documents as history. For example, he left the papal letter "neatly tucked away in the back of Easter tables no one would need to consult until 1064, thus effectively removing it from circulation for a generation, but inescapably binding it to a text of great future value. In a sense, Ademar sent the papal letter on to posterity with the address of 532 Easters yet to come" (276). Finally, on his pilgrimage to Jerusalem, he stopped off at Limoges to donate his manuscript collection to the monastery of Saint Martial, where his forgeries could quietly await the reception as history they would begin to receive within a generation.

Richard Landes has produced a biographical study of Ademar of Chabannes that makes a compelling case for modification of a super-annuated portrait framed overlong by inert tradition. Yet his book is a major contribution in many other respects as well, for Ademar's *oeuvre* amounts to much more than "the autograph record of a man going mad" (8); it "constitutes one of the earliest large collections of autographs from any civilization" (7) and abounds with invaluable insights and fresh perspectives on the many political, social, and theological crises that erupted in Christendom around the turn of the millennium. The nature of Ademar's career provides Landes with an excellent opportunity to bring to bear a vast array of research on the tenth and eleventh centuries. He explores the tensions within the Church and cloister as well as those between the Church and various secular spheres, detects nuances in the ideational makeup of numerous, often contentious mentalities, and brings into sharp focus a considerable array of important topics: the Peace movement; the various types of eschatological anticipation and apocalypticism; popular devotional traditions; heresy; witchcraft; pilgrimage; and pre-crusade fervor. Nine appendices provide supplementary information

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on matters of chronology, manuscripts, paleographical difficulties, and miscellaneous historical and cultural issues. In sum, *Relics, Apocalypse, and the Deceits of History* is not only a superb biography whose astonishing story unfolds with all of the momentum of compelling detective fiction, it is also a masterful work of medieval scholarship that illustrates admirably the remarkable potential of the array of methodologies currently available to the medievalist. Landes implements them deftly and judiciously, in a study whose breadth and depth provide us with a fresh and illuminating account of a period in medieval history that does not yield its secrets readily.

Donald Maddox

Ellen B. Basso, *The Last Cannibals: A South American Oral History.* Austin: U of Texas P, 1995. 319 pp. $40.00 cloth, ISBN 0-292-70818-1; $19.95 paperback, ISBN 0-292-70819-X.

The blurb on the back cover of the paperback edition tells the reader to expect to find a challenge to "the familiar view of biography as a strictly Western literary form." Though not well-enough versed in the study of biography to really know how fair it is to think of the genre as a strictly Western literary form, it is easy enough to imagine, however, that people everywhere, even the "people without history," tell stories to one another. Stephen Jay Gould not so long ago proposed that *homo sapiens* might just as well have been named *homo narrator.* It is indeed easy to imagine people everywhere telling stories that take up as their subjects stories about the lives of others. But is biography really then a human universal? I do not yet know. There is what used to be called a "fudge factor" built into the "as a strictly Western literary form" phrase. No doubt there are indeed some familiar Western aspects of the literary form which will not survive any search for the universal. But diversity surely is valuable and interesting as well, and the stories Ellen Basso brings us, "biographies of powerful warriors whose actions led to the emergence of a more recent social order based on restrained behaviors from an earlier time when people were said to be fierce and violent," will surely be of interest to readers of *Biography.*

This book is the author's third in her series on Kalapalo narrative discourse—the first two were *A Musical View of the Universe* (U of Pennsylvania P, 1985) and *In Favor of Deceit: A Study of Tricksters in an Amazonian Society* (U of Arizona P, 1987). A dozen years earlier, Basso had published her ethnographic overview, *The Kalapalo Indians of Central Brazil* (Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1972). The anthropologist author began collecting the stories on which *The Last Cannibal* is built in 1966,

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stories which she herself calls "sometimes grotesque yet deeply moving," while conducting ethnographic fieldwork in central Brazil. Supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, this book is shaped from nine stories told to Basso by Kalapalo storytellers at various times between 1967 and 1982 (ix). This shaping involves two different discourses, which Basso, moving back and forth between the two, brings together using the results of her three decades of study. "The continuing discovery of patterning in stories" (ix) is an activity which has been engaging a growing group of scholars in linguistic anthropology, and Basso has been an important contributor to that dialog. But another dialog continues among the Kalapalo themselves about these stories, a dialog in which they have been willing to include their visiting professor from the far North. In the Kalapalo stories, there "is always an active dialogic relation between the narrator and a listener-responder" (299), and this has an impact on the structure of the story. Basso explains that there is no memorization of these oral narratives, no "mechanical reproduction of stories between generations of tellers" (xii). But stories are always retold by some listeners to younger people, and there is a cultural tradition of specific instruction from ancestors to make their lives known to those who come after. Basso regards "the biographies presented here much as heirlooms (and in some cases verbal monuments) that people examine from time to time in order to make their own lives continuous with those lived at various times in the past" (xii).

The Last Cannibals has thirteen chapters organized into four parts. There are also a dozen black-and-white photographs, notes, references, and an index of the stories. The general index I would want to supplement for myself. I found lacking, for example, an index entry for the form *tiitsofo*. In the general index of *In Favor of Deceit*, this is glossed 'what-sayer' and 'Kalapalo story-telling responder-ratifier.' 'What-sayer' appears often in *The Last Cannibals*, and in the introductory chapter on "the language in storytelling" we do find "listener-responder (tiitsofo)" (29). Basso may have grown weary of repeating what is for her elementary.

The first four chapters provide an introduction and ease us into the challenges which face a Western reader. The opening notifies us that the book is concerned with one of "the more remarkable stories of Native South American ethnic survival" (1), and links *The Last Cannibals* to a body of scholarship wishing to "recast the relations between our received ideas about language, culture, society, and the individual" (x). Chapter 2, "The Language in Storytelling," is analytic, and explains the presentation of the texts in terms of lines and verse, according to how the storyteller's voice is used in the telling. We also learn a bit about the author's struggles with publishers (30), and even with reviewers (37) of an earlier book in the same style.

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Basso insists that her presentation decisions are the right ones, that the "sheer number of pages given over to text translations is a consequence of my use of writing conventions . . . that help a reader to see the narrative structure of each story and to imagine in a sensory way something of what the storytellers did with their voices during the performances" (37). Still, if one tries to read the stories only, skipping the commentary and contextualization, one "probably won't like the stories, won't find them very interesting." Chapter 3 presents the first of nine stories; this is a myth-like treatment of "an early experience of Europeans," a story presented first deliberately "because it is a story about the past which seems to be very carefully organized through conventional, even perhaps stereotypical, narrative expression" (41). Chapter 4 is a "testimonial" about Colonel Sir Percival Fawcett, his son, and a friend, the Igelisi (Englishmen) who disappeared in this area in 1927 while searching, funded by H. Rider Haggard, for remnants of the lost civilization of Mu.

Parts 2 and 3 consist of warrior or bow-master biographies and community biographies. I would have said that Part 2 contains the warrior biographies, and Part 3 the community biographies, but I find myself confused by Basso's statement (38) which assigns to Part 2 the community biographies. In the stories of migrations and contacts with other people, in "the searching for a suitable place to settle down,"

> the ambiguities of identity and moral-ethical boundaries are played upon, just as in the warrior biographies. So community biographies and warrior biographies are all permutations of the same, more general, but untold narrative of how Alto Xingu society came into existence: piecemeal, unintended, unplanned, but gradually and more determinedly with an emergent ideology shared by its participants. (197)

These two sets of stories are made up of four stories each. Perhaps Basso has woven Kalapalo structure into her own book, as a result of studying the Kalapalo patterning of numbers, where some sets of four indicate completion (38). Her last two stories are told by women, and her concluding story is one without an end.

In Part Four's single chapter: "Conclusion: History, Ideology, and the Personal Version of Reality," Basso says two concepts, ideology and biography, were valuable through all her years of study and through all her efforts to understand the narratives and "what the Kalapalo storytellers were trying to say" to her (293). "To the Kalapalo," says Basso, "history is first and foremost biographical, in that the events of the past are remembered as stories about specific, named people" (295). What is problematic for the Western listener or reader is recognizing that the biographical content in the stories is emerging through narrative rather than being represented by it.

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> Many of the events are of speech-centered and generally dialogical actions that result in distinctively individual (though not always fully unique) versions of reality developed within and through particular social configurations. In order to understand these, one needs to become more deeply involved in a search for the individual voices and the cohesion and coherence that are created between them: how the narrators' descriptions of actions are connected to each other to form an intersubjective, emergent narrative process and where and how these voices are repeatedly, yet variously, heard. (294)

In this concluding chapter, Basso discusses a number of differences between Western and Kalapalo biographies. One sharp difference is that the Kalapalo person's decisions to act are "motivated through interaction instead of by personal introspection" (296). But though there are other important differences, there are interesting similarities as well: "The self-conscious references warriors often make to their actions as substance for future storytelling—'Let my life be something to tell to those who come after'—suggest a joint-authorship of the story, an embedding of autobiography within biography. The warrior contributes as much to the story as a conscious actor aware of a future audience as do the people who tell about his life years after" (300).

Michael L. Forman

John Halperin, *Eminent Georgians: The Lives of King George V, Elizabeth Bowen, St. John Philby, and Nancy Astor.* New York: St. Martin's, 1995. 242 pp. $29.95, ISBN 0-312-12261-1.

Only a writer with the credentials and reputation of John Halperin would risk asking for comparisons with Lytton Strachey's classic volume, and even go beyond Strachey's stated aims. Whereas the biographer of eminent Victorians articulates the modest desire "to examine and elucidate certain fragments of the truth which took my fancy and lay to my hand," Halperin claims more for his subjects: "Their spiritual and historical ambivalence defines the age they lived in; and the age they lived in, it may be, was defined in some small way by the lives they led" (3). And indeed, Halperin constructs fascinating narratives of at least two Georgians—his accounts of Philby and Astor are illuminating and compelling, providing intriguing glimpses into the paradoxes and sometimes downright lunacy behind England's imperial and political practices between the wars.

The opening section on George V is perhaps the least successful of this quartet of life stories. To some extent Halperin is hampered by

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his implicit goal to rehabilitate what he considers the tarnished reputation of the monarch. In order to rescue George V from the unappetizing epithet "Victorian," the biographer makes a case for George's liberalism and political acumen, characteristics that played an important role in the survival of the British monarchy: "there can be little doubt that he strengthened the throne in terms of its place in the hearts of his people, both by the role he played in the political affairs of the nation and the affection he commanded and held among his subjects in the Empire. Once could argue that, for the British monarchy, his reign was the most salutary in three centuries" (31).

As evidence of this principled liberalism, Halperin points to George's attitude toward his Indian subjects: "We must . . . trust the Natives more and give them a greater share in the Government or anyhow allow them to express their views" (28). Even if one agrees with Halperin that "[t]hese were progressive, nearly radical sentiments in 1906" (28), an account of George and Mary's subsequent visit to India problematizes the idea of the enlightened ruler bent on more democratic imperial practice. Halperin tells us that not only was it arranged that "thousands prostrated themselves on the ground" wherever the King and Queen went, but also "a new, imperial crown had to be manufactured expressly for this journey and this event. It was paid for, but not owned or retained by, the people of India" (37). Such expensive performance of monarchy is worthy of the late Tudors or even Louis XIV, and one wishes for Halperin's commentary rather than silent approbation.[1]

George V's collusion with the Liberal party and Asquith in forcing the House of Lords to relinquish its right to veto legislation passed by the Commons represents a much more tenable example of the King's shrewd politics and his alignment with liberal social policy, and Halperin convincingly presents his case here. This, together with evidence presented outlining George's sympathy for striking workers, for the Irish, and for the disadvantaged generally, goes a long way toward constructing a portrait of a monarch sincerely attached to suffering subjects. But Halperin's subject seems to defeat his attempts at reconstruction: his passive concern during the Great War summed up in Halperin's terse "From 1914 to 1918 he worried" (40); his lack of courage and personal loyalty in his refusal to provide an asylum for his Romanov cousins, despite his assertion that "I was devoted to Nicky" (45); or "his rabid isolationism" (61) in the face of Nazi Germany. The George V who emerges from Halperin's revision is less an astute and exceptional leader than one who, as the biographer says, "By surviving . . . had become the symbol for victory" (46).

Two problems confront Halperin as he narrates the personal and literary life of Elizabeth Bowen: her simultaneous identification with and alienation from her Irishness, and the originality versus the

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derivativeness of her work. The problem for the reader is that the contraries are presented somewhat haphazardly, without allowing them to comment on each other or to develop a theory about the intersection of nationality/subjectivity/authorship. We are told that even while residing in Ireland, "she was so insulated from contemporary Irish culture that she did not hear of the Irish Literary Revival until she was seventeen" (79), and that she voluntarily spied on her countrymen for the English (108–9). But this rich space for cultural analysis is dismissed with a bland generalization: "The novelist's identification with the Irish had not weakened, though she had just finished spying on them; everyone is ambivalent about the Irish, even the Irish" (113). Her "obsessive traveling" later in life is logically ascribed to loneliness and a sense of alienation ("no one seemed to want her in Oxford" [123]), but no real connection is made to her youthful inability or refusal to find a national identity.

Similarly, Bowen's literary output is carefully described but never adequately analyzed, in part because of Halperin's conviction that most of Bowen's work can be explained by seeing it as influenced by Henry James: "The two novelists shared many assumptions about what fiction should do and how it should do it. The echoes of James one hears everywhere in Bowen's work . . . are the products more of the temperamental affinity of artists than of conscious or unconscious mimicry" (74). This affinity is ascribed to the authors' expatriate status (75) and to their painterly eye (85). Although Halperin conscientiously points out the differences between James's texts and Bowen's, one cannot help but feel that the analysis is really about variations on a theme. There is no hint here of anxiety of influence or gender as a category of authorial voice. Elsewhere, Halperin points out echoes of Ibsen and Waugh in Bowen's work (93, 104): the constant reference to influences and borrowings works against the assertion that "much of what we now consider typical of wartime London, as well as of wartime writing, originated with her" (108).

Of the four Georgian figures Halperin discusses, perhaps the least known to a general audience is St. John Philby—"tycoon, philosopher, writer, linguist, eccentric, explorer, wanderer" (129) . . . and father of a notorious traitor. St. John Philby's career makes such fascinating reading that one wishes it were not always to be mediated by our knowledge of the son's life. St. John Philby's service to his country began with a conventional progression from Westminster to Cambridge to the Indian Civil Service, and according to Halperin, it was doomed to failure very early on because of his unconventionally early marriage. At the outbreak of World War I, Philby left a dead-end career in India and ended up in Baghdad, with a brief to help the Arab independence movements against Turkey. Philby's consequent exploits, which included "going native" and defying British directives,

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are, as Halperin points out, reminiscent of T. E. Lawrence's experiences. Halperin's narrative, however, paints a man and a career ultimately much more interesting than Lawrence's more spectacular public life.

In part, Philby's career fascinates because of his persistent efforts to find financial stability and social acceptance even as he transgresses every rule his British masters (and later his Arab allies) held sacred. His concurrent desires—for success in business, for political power, for sexual liberty, for real knowledge of Arabia—kept him constantly on the brink of spectacular success or dismal failure. Halperin's account provides an irresistible picture of incongruity: the same man who penetrated the remotest parts of Arabia, who "had gone without water for fifty-five days just to see if he could do it" (150), makes careful deals with Ford motors and Esso in order to pay "household debts and school bills" (151); the man who converts to Islam and takes an Arab wife writes articles for the *Encyclopedia Britannica* and teaches at the American University in Beirut. Embodying the contradictions created by the imperial enterprise, St. John Philby provides the center and the energy of Halperin's book.

If she had not to follow Philby, Nancy Astor as represented by Halperin would be a compelling figure. As it is, Philby's extraordinary and complex life casts a shadow over the tale of a strong-willed, privileged, not very bright hostess who, through enormous wealth, social position, and historical accident, became the first woman to serve in Parliament. Such a reductive summary does a disservice to Halperin's detailed and derogatory tracing of Astor's public career. Giving her due praise for talent as a campaigner and a public speaker, outlining her association with George Bernard Shaw—which led to her interest in "women police and widows' pensions, penal reform, the plight of women prisoners . . . nursery schools and the status of babies born in prison" (206)—Halperin goes on to present a scathing account of Astor's love affair with fascism. According to Halperin, "she and her circle became the arch-appeasers of the moment and among the very last people on earth to tumble to the truth of Hitler's aims. . . . The only other possibility is worse: that she and her set understood Hitler very well from the start" (212).

Nancy Astor ruined her public reputation, says Halperin, in part because she was constructed by her early upbringing in the American South and in part because of "the shallowness of her intelligence" (229). But as he himself articulates in this and other sections of *Eminent Georgians*, much of British elite culture was attracted to Nazism and its glorification of a superior race. At the risk of asking a biographer to be a cultural historian, one wishes that Halperin had read into these sketches a story about the ideological contradictions built into the imperial enterprise of a democratic nation. The passivity of George V,

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the national self-loathing of Elizabeth Bowen, the multiple identities of St. John Philby, and the banality of Nancy Astor all provide ample material for such a reading of eminent Georgians.

NOTES

1. Halperin's assertions about George V's racial liberalism are challenged by snippets of information in Lawrence James's recent history of the British Empire. James points out that during World War I, Africans fighting for the British "were, quite deliberately, not being asked to kill white men but to do their chores, or, as George V told them when they arrived in France in July 1917: 'without munitions of War my armies cannot fight; without food they cannot live. You are helping to send these things to them each day, and in so doing you are hurling your spears at the enemy'" (*The Rise and Fall of the British Empire* [New York: St. Martin's, 1994] 369). James adds that "when the Rajah of Pudokota married Miss Molly Fink, an Australian girl, he faced the combined disapproval of Austen Chamberlain, the Secretary of State for India, George V and Queen Mary, and forfeited any chance of ever being presented at court" (435).

Tara Ghoshal Wallace

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Reviewed Elsewhere

All publication information listed is derived from the journals monitored. Ideally, each entry includes the title of the work, the author, the place and date of publication, the publisher, the number of pages, and the price. Sometimes, however, this information is not available in the journal or differs from that of the publisher.

This issue contains reviews from the *Bulletin Critique du Livre Français, Cineaste, French Review, French Studies, New York Review of Books (NYRB), New York Times Book Review (NYTBR), The New Yorker, Revue d'histoire litteraire de la France, Times Literary Supplement (TLS), Women's Studies International Forum,* and the *Women's Review of Books.*

Acton, Harold, Jean Cocteau, and Alberto Giacommetti

Some Remarkable Men: Further Memoirs. James Lord. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1996. 324 pp. $27.50.

"This charming, informative book is bristling with good anecdotes and meticulous descriptions of people and places (Mr. Lord, now 73, kept a careful journal which has served him in good stead). By turns mocking and compassionate, 'Some Remarkable Men' is an insider's account of what use some leading artists of the century made of their freedom conferred on them by their prestige and by the very nature of their calling."

Edmund White, *NYTBR,* Sept. 15, 1996: 7–9.

Ailey, Alvin

Alvin Ailey: A Life in Dance. Jennifer Dunning. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1996. 468 pp. $30.00.

"Dunning's book is distinguished by its bigheartedness, its atmospherics, its thorough reporting, and its treatment of Ailey as an artist, not a case history."

The New Yorker, Nov. 25, 1996: 87.

"At the heart [of this book] is the vivid drama of Ailey's rise and fall. To condense that to a sentence: Ailey, an only child, was raised in poverty in rural Texas by a volatile single mother; grew up to make a dance set to Negro spirituals, called 'Revelations'—one of the sweetest half-hours in the modern dance repertory; built a company and a school that survived him; couldn't handle success; and is buried in Whittier, Calif., next to his mother who, for good or for ill, proved to be the most important muse in his life. There is much more to his career. Ms. Dunning lays it out year by year, dance by dance, tour by

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back-breaking tour—the frustrations and the accolades, the smashed hopes and the unexpected angels who flew in just at the moment Ailey needed them and who still felt protective of him after he'd turned his back on their support. For a reader to whom dancing is marginal, it may be more than one wants to know. For this reader, Ms. Dunning's chronicle has the effect of restoring, down to every last bar stool and church pew, an entire razed village."

Mindy Aloff, *NYTBR*, Nov. 3, 1996: 13.

ALIBHAI-BROWN, YASMIN

No Place Like Home: An Autobiography. Yasmin Alibhai-Brown. London: Virago, 1995. 199 pp. £8.99.

"The book, set out as an autobiography of the author, captures the historical changes of the new nation (Uganda), its diverse community and the end of British colonialism with its tragic end for the Asian and African community."

Maher Anjum, *Women's Studies International Forum* 19.5 (Sept.-Oct. 1996): 570.

ALLFREY, PHYLLIS SHAND

Phyllis Shand Allfrey: A Caribbean Life. Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1996. 335 pp. $50.00 cloth, $18.95 pb.

[This] "affectionate and exhaustive biography makes intermittently fascinating reading, though the web of detail is sometimes overwhelming. . . . Shand Allfrey deserves her place in history. Elizabeth Paravisini-Gebert's biography will help to ensure that she gets it."

Lucretia Stewart, *TLS*, Oct. 25, 1996: 30.

ARAGON, LOUIS

Aragon: Une vie à changer. Pierre Daix. Paris: Seuil, 1975. Paris: Flammarion, 1996. 566 pp. F160.

A biography of the works, a biography of the man, partly an autobiography, as Aragon intervenes through footnotes: the dialogue between biographer and biographee constitutes a kind of paratext, showing how all truth is fragile, sometimes untenable, and how difficult it is for the biographee to accept an imperfect portrait of himself. Although in sympathy with his subject, Daix had to conquer his book by a hard-fought struggle against Aragon.

Bulletin Critique du Livre Français 571–72 (Apr.-May 1996): 628–9.

AUDEN, W. H.

Wystan and Chester: A Personal Memoir of W. H. Auden and Chester Kallman. Thekla Clark. New York: Columbia UP, 1996. 130 pp. $19.95.

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"Thekla Clark, with no personal ax to grind [as did Kallman's stepmother in an earlier memoir] and nothing but shrewdness and a generous spirit to guide her, has written a more graceful and remarkable book, one nobody who cares about Auden can afford to ignore. . . . This sounds threatening. In fact, reading Ms. Clark's memoir is likely to be an experience of undiluted pleasure. The stories, of which there are an abundance, are wonderful."

Miranda Seymour, *NYTBR*, Sept. 22, 1996: 7.

Beauvoir, Simone de

Simone de Beauvoir: The Making of an Intellectual. Toril Moi. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1994. 324 pp. $54.95.

"Toril Moi's fascinating new book attempts to capture Beauvoir's unique position in our century. While Moi takes into account both Beauvoir's life and her writing, the subtitle of the book stresses that she sees Beauvoir as a distillation of different discourses and determinants. Consequently Moi's analysis relies on reception studies, the sociology of culture, philosophical analysis, psychoanalytic inquiry and feminist theory."

Catherine R. Montfort, *French Review* 70.1 (Oct. 1996): 125–6.

Beck, Christian. See **Gide, André.**

Beckett, Samuel

Damned to Fame: The Life Of Samuel Beckett. James Knowlson. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996. 800 pp. $35.00.

The World of Samuel Beckett, 1906-1946. Lois Gordon. New Haven: Yale UP, 1996. 264 pp. $28.50.

Samuel Beckett: The Last Modernist. Anthony Cronin. New York: HarperCollins, 1996. 645 pp. £25.

"James Knowlson's inventory is detailed. . . . Gordon traverses nearly identical ground, though less thoroughly."

George Steiner, *The New Yorker*, Sept. 16, 1996: 92–95.

"[Cronin's] book is aimed at the general reader (there are no footnotes) and he has an eye for the good story and the startling detail. He is cool, measured, amused, and maintains a respectful yet often wittily ironic attitude towards his subject, acknowledging Beckett's human weaknesses as well as his strengths, his artistic failures as well as his triumphs. . . . *Damned to Fame* is . . . the best-informed and most detailed life of Beckett we are likely to get, at least in this generation. Yet Knowlson has so many facts at his disposal that he does not know when to stop piling them on."

John Banville, *NYRB*, Nov. 14, 1996: 24.

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Knowlson's and Cronin's are "splendid biographies" of Beckett, while Lois Gordon has given us "a provocative study of the probable impact of events in the 'outside world' on young Beckett. . . . An authorized biography, *Damned to Fame* is the more encyclopedic of the two . . . for Knowlson has gained exclusive access to some hitherto untapped archival sources . . . yet Cronin also charts ground little explored by Knowlson . . . and has a more incisive feel for Frenchness. . . . No one reading these invigorating studies will continue to perceive Beckett as a cold formalist absorbed in abstractions, and in light of all this unsuspected knowledge, we can now take a fresh look at the work of one of the most deep thinking and deep feeling writers of any age."

John Taylor, *TLS*, Sept. 27, 1996: 3–4.

BELL, GERTRUDE

Desert Queen, The Extraordinary Life of Gertrude Bell: Adventurer, Adviser to Kings, Ally of Lawrence of Arabia. Janet Wallach. New York: Nan A. Talese/Doubleday, 1996. 419 pp. $27.50.

"Janet Wallach's account of the life of this brave, clever, difficult woman is in some ways excellent, in other ways rather bad. . . . The effect is as though one were reading two books simultaneously: one a highly intelligent history of the Middle East, the other a Harlequin romance. The two styles sit uneasily with each other, and Wallach should have chosen between them. As it is, she has done neither herself nor her subject justice."

Selina Hastings, *The New Yorker*, Sept. 30, 1996: 82–86.

"The author of three previous books on the Middle East with her husband, John, Ms. Wallach is an expert on the region and her knowledge is on full display here, sometimes too visibly for the average reader. On the other hand, there are fascinating details of Bell's eccentricities, her curious hats, her feuds with her bookmaker and her special hair tonics, sent from London."

Kate Muir, *NYTBR*, Sept. 8, 1996: 32.

BRADMAN, DON

Bradman: An Australian Hero. Charles Williams. New York: Little Brown. 336 pp. £20.

"Williams . . . by setting Bradman in an unusually controversial period of Australian history, has been able to produce a biography that has distinctive merit over and above the nature of its central character."

Alan Ross, *TLS*, Oct. 25, 1996: 30.

BRITTAIN, VERA

Vera Brittain: A Feminist Life. Deborah Gorham. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1996. 330 pp. $34.95.

"Gorham is to be commended for producing a balanced book, and

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for making extensive and intelligent use of feminist criticism (although she tangles with some feminist critics, including me)."

Carolyn Heilbrun, *Women's Review of Books* 13.10–11 (July 1996).

Bruce, David K. E.

The Last American Aristocrat: The Biography of David K. E. Bruce, 1898–1987. Nelson D. Langford. New York: Little Brown, 1996. 484 pp. $27.95.

" . . . we are in the presence of a most admirable biography of a man of unusual public and private interest. . . . Nelson Langford in chronicling the sweep of this life has shown an appropriate sense of style and proportion."

Roy Jenkins, *TLS*, Sept. 13, 1996: 30.

Buck, Pearl S.

Pearl S. Buck: A Cultural Biography. Peter Conn. New York: Cambridge UP, 1996. 468 pp. $29.95.

"How did a fundamentalist missionary's daughter and professor's wife who lived most of her first 40 years in unhappy obscurity in China become an icon of modern celebrity, and why has she dropped so thoroughly out of the literary-historical record? . . . Peter Conn, professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania, sets out to answer these and other questions in this immensely interesting and detailed biography. Despite some problems, he has produced a fascinating book, and one that is, for all its scholarly apparatus and methodical presentation of data, as much a page turner as anything Buck ever wrote."

Katha Pollitt, *NYTBR*, Nov. 17, 1996: 13–14.

Cézanne, Paul

Paul Cézanne: Portrait of My World. CD-ROM (Windows and Macintosh). Bellevue, WA: Corbis, 1996. $45.00.

"This disk . . . deploys Cézanne's biography and art to introduce a rich terrain of French history and culture and to chart a familiar map of high modernism that advances Cézanne as the central link between Manet and modern masters of abstraction like Picasso and Mondrian."

Elizabeth Childs, *NYTBR*, Sept. 15, 1996: 23.

Chaplin, Charles

Tramp: The Life of Charlie Chaplin. Joyce Milton. New York: HarperCollins, 1996. 560 pp. $32.00.

"Milton, having arraigned her subject as a chauvinist pig and a Stalinist lackey, suggests that these two things were what led to the decline of his work around the time of 'Monsieur Verdoux' (1947)."

Adam Gopnik, *The New Yorker*, Aug. 12, 1996: 70–73.

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CLAUDEL, PAUL and JACQUES MADAULE

Connaissance et reconnaissance, Correspondance, 1929-54. Paul Claudel and Jacques Madaule. Text established and presented by Andrée Hirsch and Pierre Madaule. Paris: Desclé de Brouwer, 1996. 434 pp. F175.

These letters (Claudel: 83, Madaule: 36) are of great interest to those who remember that Madaule was the first true specialist of Claudel's dramatic work. The review *Les Etudes* indicted Madaule for his "integral Claudelism," but Claudel retorted that "the Madaule road" was the only way for anyone desirous to do "the Claudel tour." These letters, fully equipped with adequate foreword, notes, annexes, index, testify to the trust and friendship between these two men.

Bulletin Critique du Livre Français 571–72 (Apr.-May 1996): 627–8.

CLINTON, BILL

Boy Clinton: The Political Biography. R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr. New York: Regnery, 1996. 302 pp. $24.95.

"R. Emmett Tyrrell Jr., the glib editor of *The American Spectator,* does not like Bill Clinton, the glib President of the United States, not one bit. In 'Boy Clinton' Mr. Tyrrell does his best to portray the President as a schemer, philanderer, liar, traitor, malingerer, procrastinator, bumbler, and poseur. (And also as a bad dresser.)"

David B. Shirman, *NYTBR,* Sept. 8, 1996: 22.

The President We Deserve, Bill Clinton: His Rise, Falls, and Comebacks. Martin Walker. New York: Crown, 1996. 360 pp. $27.50.

"If there is an overall thesis to 'The President We Deserve,' it's that Bill Clinton is the archetypal postwar American, his life having unfolded in the eddies of the vast social revolution that swirled around him. Mr. Walker sees Mr. Clinton as the perfect symbol of the great American meritocracy that blossomed after 1945 thanks to the G.I. Bill, the sexual revolution and the civil rights movement. . . . As Mr. Walker tells it, Mr. Clinton's story is dizzying, peppered with the contradictions we've come to expect from the razorback who went bowling dressed like Elvis Presley, but who is also the Rhodes Scholar who 'developed a fondness' for the 'Meditations' of Marcus Aurelius."

Douglas Brinkley, *NYTBR,* Sept. 22, 1996: 14.

CLINTON, HILLARY RODHAM

The Seduction of Hillary Rodham Clinton. David Brock. New York: The Free Press, 1996. 452 pp. $26.00.

"[Brock's conservative supporters] are in for a shock. They will not only be disappointed; they will be infuriated. While almost perfunctorily placing his story within the lines of conservative politics, Mr. Brock seems to have found in 'St. Hillary' a means to attempt his

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redemption as a journalist. In substance and style, he distances himself from the polemicist of 'The Real Anita Hill.' He has tried to do his subject justice in the broadest sense."

James B. Stewart, *NYTBR*, Oct. 13, 1996: 9–10.

Clinton, Bill and Hillary

Partners in Power: The Clintons and Their America. Roger Morris. New York: Holt, 1996. 526 pp. $27.50.

"[I]t is a good question why any number of . . . improbable tales told about the Clintons' days in Arkansas were not given . . . skeptical examination. Had that been done, we might not today be faced with as slipshod and manifestly fraudulent a piece of work as Roger Morris's *Partners in Power.*

. . . the actual world of Arkansas politics doesn't really interest Roger Morris very much. Rather, most of the energy in *Partners in Power* is reserved for the so-called 'character issues'—what House Speaker Newt Gingrich calls 'the Clinton Scandals.' And oddly enough, given his ostensibly leftist views, most of Morris's sources, which he presents with all the trappings of scholarly paraphernalia, turn out to be right-wing periodicals. . . . In fact, although Morris does not mention it, many of the most extreme charges of moral turpitude Morris lodges against the President and his wife are identical to those first made in the scurrilous videotape, *The Clinton Chronicles.*"

Gene Lyons, *NYRB*, Aug. 8, 1996: 25.

Cocteau, Jean. See Acton, Harold.

Colette, Sidonie Gabrielle

Mes Vérités. Colette. Interviewed by André Parinaud. Paris: Écriture, 1996. 234 pp. F120.

These interviews were broadcast at the time but never collected in book form. A copious foreword explains how "the freest woman in the world" was able to write her work, and at the same time, lead a life that often ostracized her. The talks reveal some traits of Colette's personality: at once spontaneous and cautious, fearing to do wrong. Colette speaks with naturalness, without ostentation, bitterness, or regrets. A book to approach her with respect and affection.

Bulletin Critique du Livre Français 571–72 (Apr.-May 1996): 628.

Coward, Noël

Bittersweet: A Biography of Noël Coward. Philip Hoare. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996. 544 pp. $30.00.

"It remains for future biographers to assess the emotional price that Coward paid for the enchantment he manufactured. For now, we must

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read between the lines of Hoare's judicious account, and decode the winsome weasel words that Coward himself left behind."

John Lahr, *The New Yorker*, Sept. 9, 1996: 86–90.

D'APRANO, ZELDA

Zelda. Zelda D'Aprano. North Melbourne: Spinifex, 1995. 408 pp. $19.95.

"Zelda is the rereleased autobiography/political tour-de-force of Zelda D'Aprano, a feminist activist living in Melbourne, Australia. . . . The issues Zelda raises, and her own story, are as relevant today as they were 18 years ago at the time of the initial publication, which is indicative of her ability to be 'in the future' even when she is recording the past. This is living, talking, eating, bleeding, and laughing history."

Sarah Zeitlein, *Women's Studies International Forum* 19.3 (May-June 1996): 348.

DESMOULINS, LUCILE

Journal, 1788-1793. Lucile Desmoulins. Text established and presented by Philippe Lejeune. Paris: Edition des Cendres, 1995. 164 pp. F140.

Attracted by the name of the diarist, the reader is left unsatisfied, for these notes, written at a turning point in French history, are hardly a journal—rather fragments, snatches of modest confidences of a young woman whose quiet life was only disturbed by the revolution. This is no fault of Lejeune's, who as a biographer madly in love with life stories, scrupulously respects his source, in this case one of the earliest writers of intimate diaries.

Bulletin Critique du Livre Français 569–70 (Feb.-Mar. 1996): 285.

DMYTRK, EDWARD

Odd Man Out: A Memoir of the Hollywood Ten. Edward Dmytryk. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1995. 210 pp. $14.95.

"Edward Dmytryk achieved notoriety in the early 1950s when he became the only member of the Hollywood Ten to recant his previous views and retestify as a 'friendly' witness for the House Un-American Activities Committee. In *Odd Man Out,* he shares his perspectives before and after the recantation, and he reflects on the Hollywood Ten as individuals and as a phenomenon. His account is prone to the usual subjectivity of the memoir form, but he rarely strays from the historical record."

Dan Georgakas, *Cineaste* 22.2 (1996): 58–9.

EDEN, ANTHONY

Anthony Eden: A Life and Reputation. David Dutton. London: Edward Arnold, 1996. 576 pp. £25.

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". . . David Dutton's work is not a biography but 'a series of linked essays,' primarily, though not totally devoted to Eden's impact on foreign affairs. . . . This is a genuine contribution to an understanding of Eden, and its final verdict is, rightly, if with stray reservations, a positive one."

Robert Rhodes Jones, *TLS*, Nov. 8, 1996.

Einstein, Albert

Einstein, History and Other Passions: The Rebellion Against Science and the End of the Twentieth Century. Gerald Holton. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1996. 240 pp. $14.00.

"In this short book [Holton] distills a lifetime of reflection on Einstein. It is rich stuff, scanning the entire history of science and relating to much else in our culture, notably literature."

Dennis Flanagan, *NYTBR*, Sept. 22, 1996: 26.

Farrakhan, Louis

Prophet of Rage: A Life of Louis Farrakhan and His Nation. Arthur J. Magida. New York: Basic, 1996. 264 pp. $25.00.

"Arthur Magida, a Jewish critic of Farrakhan, took the trouble to interview him on their differences in an attempt to bridge them, to create a constructive framework for dialogue. The basic facts of Farrakhan's life are well presented by Magida, and the interviews suggest Farrakhan's charm. . . . Magida tries to be sympathetic to the Muslim religion, but he is not very helpful on this exotic-looking sect."

Garry Wills, *NYRB*, Sept. 19, 1996: 61.

Ford, Ford Madox

Ford Maddox Ford: A Dual Life. Vol. 2. *The After-War World.* Max Saunders. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1996. 696 pp. £35.

"Max Saunders' magisterial biography . . . is a work of exemplary erudition, critical intelligent sympathy. . . . Saunders convinces us that dualities can be found in nearly everything Ford wrote or did."

John Taylor, *TLS*, Nov. 1, 1996: 4-5.

Foucault, Michel

Saint Foucault: Toward a Gay Hagiography. David M. Halperin. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995. 246 pp. $23.00.

"David Halperin is as much interested in Foucault the man as Foucault the thinker; his *Saint Foucault* proposes Michel Foucault as a personal inspiration for gay scholars, and his writing as an important contribution to the burgeoning field of gay/queer studies. One can only hope that this relatively new scholarly discipline can maintain the high standards of insight and challenge that *Saint Foucault* represents."

William Cloonan, *French Review* 70.1 (Oct. 1996): 106-7.

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GALILEI, GALILEO

Starry Messenger: A Book Depicting the Life of the Famous Scientist, Mathematician, Philosopher, Physicist, Galileo Galilei. Written and Illustrated by Peter Sis. New York: Frances Foster Books/Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1996. $16.00.

"Complementing the spare, almost minimal narration is smaller handwritten text in the picture margins—a device Mr. Sis has used effectively in previous books—which enlarges on the main narrative by supplying a meaty chronology of facts, dates and quotations from Galileo's own writing. As a result of the interplay between main and secondary text, and the artistry of the pictures, 'Starry Messenger' possesses a richness and dignity that are likely to enchant children and adults alike."

Elizabeth Spires, *NYTBR*, Nov. 10, 1996: 32.

GAUTIER, THÉOPHILE

Correspondance générale. Vol. IX. *1865–1867.* Ed. Claudine Lacoste-Veysseyre, under the direction of Pierre Laubriet and the collaboration of Jean-Claude Fizaine and Andrew Gann. Geneva: Droz, 1995. 626 pp.

This ninth volume of letters, in a series that began being published over ten years ago, takes us to five years before Gautier's death. This volume includes very short letters, of interest mostly to biography specialists, as well as longer, more notable ones such as the exchanges with Carlotta Grisis. Although this is a carefully edited volume, the commentaries are at times rather dry and neutral.

Patrick Berthier, *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France* 3 (1996): 510-11.

GIACOMMETTI, ALBERTO. See ACTON, HAROLD.

GIDE, ANDRÉ

Correspondance. André Gide and Christian Beck. Ed. Pierre Masson. Preface by Béatrix Beck. Geneva: Droz, 1994. 293 pp. SwF48.

"This well-researched edition makes good the deficiencies in previous presentations of Gide's side of the correspondence, but in departing from a conventional 'introduction,' Masson omits or obscures certain factual information one might have expected to find conveniently at hand."

Michael Tilby, *French Studies* 50.1 (Jan. 1996): 351–2.

GILBERT, W. S.

W. S. Gilbert: A Classic Victorian and His Theatre. Jane Stedman. New York: Oxford UP, 1996. 374 pp. $30.00.

"Ms. Stedman, an emeritus professor of English at Roosevelt University in Chicago, calls her biography 'a too-long-gestated

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descendent' of a doctoral dissertation written in 1955. Therein lie its strength and weaknesses. 'W. S. Gilbert' is strong on research. Ms. Stedman also keeps an admirable steady head about the thin-skinned, super-litigious Gilbert, nicely discriminating between his legitimate quarrels and those motivated by spleen. She provides clear and insightful synopses of his serious and comic works, no small feat when the index lists more than 100 titles. Further she has had access to the D'Oyly Carte family papers and permission to quote for the first time from letters and memorandum related to the Savoy Theater triumvirate: Gilbert, Sullivan and the impresario Richard D'Oyly Carte. . . . But Ms. Stedman's long immersion in her subject has its drawbacks. Saturated by the man's life and the period, she is strangely indifferent to the comfort of her readers."

Margot Peters, *NYTBR*, Dec. 8, 1996: 24.

Goebbels, Joseph

Goebbels: Mastermind of the Third Reich. David Irving. London: Focal Point. New York: St. Martins, 1996. 722 pp. £25, $35.00.

"David Irving's biography of Goebbels will not induce much reexamination on the part of its readers, not even to the extent of persuading them that his subtitle is an accurate estimate of its subject's position in the Nazi hierarchy. . . . But Goebbels was the instrument through whom [Hitler's] decisions were communicated and explained and justified to the Germans and to other peoples within reach of his broadcasts; and Irving's book adds significantly to our knowledge of how he went about doing this.

As a biography, it has its deficiencies and is far less satisfactory, for example, than that of Ralph Georg Reuth. . . . Irving claims that his book is the first to be based on a thorough knowledge of all of its subject's diaries, which are now in print, but in attempting to demonstrate this he stays too close to their text to be able always to elaborate usefully on the events described."

Gordon A. Craig, *NYRB*, Sept. 19, 1996: 8–12.

Goldberg, Arthur J.

Arthur J. Goldberg: New Deal Liberal. David L. Stebenne. New York: Oxford UP, 1996. 539 pp. $45.00.

"... 'Arthur J. Goldberg' [is] an earnest, useful but slow-moving book, which, the author acknowledges, is less a biography than a history of pivotal events in which Goldberg played a major part. Mr. Stebenne, a history professor at Ohio State University, is primarily concerned with the decline of what he calls the New Deal consensus among business, labor, and government, and the closely related decline of the American union movement. Much of this story is conveyed through a lens tightly focused on the steel industry and especially

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the million-member United Steelworkers of America, and on Goldberg, its general counsel from 1948 to 1961."

Sanford D. Horwitt, *NYTBR*, Oct. 27, 1996: 41.

GORBACHEV, MIKHAIL

Memoirs. Mikhail Gorbachev. New York: Doubleday, 1996. 769 pp. $35.00.

"[Gorbachev's *Memoirs*] make a credible case for the proposition that he was a genuine reformer, and they also provide insight into the way he, a latent dissident, rose to the top of the apparatchik pyramid. They contain a spirited and convincing defense of Gorbachev's foreign policies. But the other mysteries remain, and the reader will be disappointed by his failure to deal forthrightly with many of the most controversial aspects of his rule. Informed readers will be offended by what, at times, can be regarded only as a deliberate distortion of facts. . . . The English translation is serviceable but mediocre. Gorbachev's prose has little sparkle but is not as awkward as the translation suggests. With a few exceptions, the translation is accurate in a literal sense; but the careful scholar or biographer would be well advised to depend upon the original or the German translation."

Jack F. Matlock, Jr, *NYRB*, Dec. 19, 1996: 34.

GORCE, NELLY

Le Journal de Ravensbrück. Nelly Gorce. Pref. Lucien Neuwirth. Arles: Actes Sud, 1995. 186 pp. F98.

A French Resistance fighter at 30, mother of two, non-Jew, Nelly Gorce wrote all she could about daily life in the camp, managed to hide her notes, but felt unable to pass on in her lifetime the terrible words brought back from hell. Twenty years after her death, her family deemed it useful to publish them. Few books have depicted such horror so forcefully. Nelly Gorce pictures her fellow prisoners with generosity but without indulgence. Her *Journal* is a legacy to mankind.

Bulletin Critique du Livre Français 569–70 (Feb.-Mar. 1996): 286.

GRAVES, ROBERT

Robert Graves and the White Goddess: 1940-85. Richard Perceval Graves. North Pomfret, VT: Weidenfeld & Nicolson/Trafalgar Square, 1996. 618 pp. $45.00.

"While he writes with scrupulous detachment, this author is clearly, in his modest way, as profound a believer in Robert's genius as was his [most] unquestioning subject.

It is not his fault that this final lap of an impeccably researched biography seems overcrowded. Letter by letter, book by book, every record of Graves's later life has been sifted and assimilated until the

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story sags under the material. Only a few people in its cast of family, friends, celebrities and hangers-on come to life."

Anne Stevenson, *NYTBR*, Nov. 10, 1996: 22.

Hammer, Armand

Dossier: The Secret History of Armand Hammer. Edward Jay Epstein. New York: Random House, 1996. 418 pp. $30.00.

"Much of the ground Mr. Epstein covers has been well plowed by earlier Hammer biographers. . . . Mr. Epstein's edge is in the wealth of primary sources he tapped in Soviet archives and elsewhere, and in the readably definitive way his story marches ahead. It is hard to imagine a sharper picture of how a tycoon is both born and made and how the power game is played."

Joseph E. Persico, *NYTBR*, Oct. 13, 1996: 14–15.

Harriman, Pamela Churchill

Reflected Glory: The Life of Pamela Churchill Harriman. Sally Bedell Smith. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996. 560 pp. $30.00.

". . . at the end of Ms. Smith's operation, the literary equivalent of a reverse face lift, Mrs. Harriman somehow emerges scarred but whole and, if anything, still more formidable with warts and all. The biographer's dislike for her subject boils on the page, but she is too honest to disguise the grudging admiration that goes with it. The Pamela Harriman she paints is both monstrous and magnificent. Even her reflected glory is dazzling."

Ben Macintyre, *NYTBR*, Nov. 10, 1996: 7.

Harrison, Barbara Grizzuti

An Accidental Autobiography. Barbara Grizzuti Harrison. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1996. 396 pp. $24.95.

"This autobiography is not 'about' her life; it is a performance of her distinctive style, intelligence and sensibility, a stylized free association—of memories and thoughts—focused on what compels her."

Elizabeth Stone, *Women's Review of Books* 14.2 (Nov. 1996): 20-21.

Henriette of England

Henriette d'Angleterre, duchesse d'Orléans. Jacqueline Duchne. Paris: Fayard, 1995. 464 pp. F150.

Another talented biography by the author of de Gringo (1985) and Bussy-Rabutin (1992). This text comes highly recommended to seventeenth-century specialists and students, and to non-specialists alike. It reflects the author's in-depth knowledge of the period and of both court life and popular culture during the reign of Louis XIV.

Marie-Odile Sweetser, *French Review* 70.1 (Oct. 1996): 111–2.

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HOLLY, BUDDY

Rave On: The Biography of Buddy Holly. Phillip Norman. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996. 332 pp. $24.00.

"'Rave On' overcomes what would have been a major obstacle to a less deft writer: the absence of interesting vice or exotic experience in Holly's meager 23 years of life. Against heavy odds, Mr. Norman succeeds in making innocence absorbing."

Ann Marlowe, *NYTBR*, Sept. 29, 1996: 21.

HOUDINI, HARRY

Houdini! Kenneth Silverman. New York: HarperCollins, 1996. 465 pp. $35.00.

"To a biographer like Silverman, who is also a magician, Houdini presents an interesting problem: how to unveil his life and art without violating the cardinal rule of magic: Don't Expose."

The New Yorker, Nov. 25, 1996: 115.

IVES, CHARLES

Charles Ives: A Life with Music. Jan Swafford. New York: Norton, 1996. 450 pp. $30.00.

"Swafford has written a scrupulously detailed and unfailingly enthusiastic biography of the great Connecticut composer (1874–1974), whom he sees not only as the natural product of turn-of-the-century Progressivism but as a musician 'invaded by the future.'"

The New Yorker, Oct. 7, 1996: 96.

JACKSON, JESSE

Jesse: The Life and Pilgrimage of Jesse Jackson. Marshall Frady. New York: Random House, 1996. 552 pp. $28.50.

"...political matters do not much interest Marshall Frady. He is more interested in novelist's details about a person—the texture of his voice, his capacity for emotion, the interior hurts he may reveal. At these, Frady is very good. He trailed around with Jackson, tape recorder turning, on trips abroad, on a nostalgic journey to Jackson's boyhood home, and around his Chicago house. The best part of his book, which is also the major part, is just Jackson talking—always fascinating, since Jackson has a penetrating mind, an ear for language, and a vivid imagination. Frady is a very good interviewer, one who gets Jackson's wife, Jackie, to reveal far more than she has to any other writer."

Garry Wills, *NYRB*, Sept. 19, 1996: 61.

JAMES, C. L. R.

Special Delivery: The Letters of C. L. R. James to Constance Webb, 1939–1948. Ed. Anna Grimshaw. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1996. 393 pp. $29.95.

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"James himself wanted this collection of his love letters published—perhaps in lieu of the autobiography he regularly promised (and failed) to write. Unfortunately, he did not live to work the letters into a cohesive book. As it now stands, 'Special Delivery' is an editorial disaster. Letters are misdated or placed out of sequence. Cryptic passages are presented without the benefit of a footnote—which is perhaps just as well. The few annotations that the editor Anna Grimshaw, a former assistant of James's who teaches at the University of Manchester, did provide tend, with alarming regularity, to be completely wrong. . . .

Yet is seems clear, even with these distractions, that there was the soul of a good book here. It would tell a complete (and rather sad) story about political and personal romanticism. And the reader who perseveres may be able to dig that book out of 'Special Delivery.'"

Scott McLemee, *NYTBR*, Sept. 8, 1996: 12.

James, Henry

Henry James: The Young Master. Sheldon M. Novick. New York: Random House, 1996. 550 pp. $35.00.

"In a finely nuanced recounting of James's life from childhood to the cusp of his major works, Mr. Novick, who teaches constitutional law and history at the Vermont Law School and who has also written a biography of Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., introduces the refreshing notion that James experienced love in a quite ordinary, first hand way. Hence, he argues, we should assume that James is describing life, not making it up."

Renee Tursi, *NYTBR*, Nov. 3, 1996: 18.

Jefferson, Thomas

The Long Affair: Thomas Jefferson and the French Revolution, 1785–1800. Conor Cruise O'Brien. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1996. 367 pp. $29.95.

"In the stock market of historical reputation Jefferson will be a blue chip so long as the Declaration remains a fundamental American document—though Mr. O'Brien makes a powerful case that he is overvalued. Cranky and sweeping, 'The Long Affair' should be read by anyone interested in Jefferson—or in a good fight."

Richard Brookhiser, *NYTBR*, Nov. 17, 1996: 23.

Pope John Paul II

His Holiness: John Paul II and the Hidden History of Our Time. Carl Bernstein and Marco Politi. New York: Doubleday, 1996. 582 pp. $27.50.

". . . some marketing genius at Doubleday decided to join this story [that the Pope, Ronald Reagan, and the CIA were responsible for

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Solidarity's victory in Poland] with an otherwise unsensational biography of the Pope, entitled, "His Holiness" and written in part by Carl Bernstein and mainly by Marco Politi, a journalist who covers the Vatican for *La Republica*. The result is a two-headed book, one head only slightly connected to the body and babbling the *Time* story again, while the other head quietly brings up aspects of the Pope's life not in accord with William Casey's faith in clandestine plots."

Garry Wills, *The New Yorker*, Dec. 2, 1996: 107–13.

"In 'His Holiness,' two veteran reporters, Carl Bernstein and Marco Politi, one based in Washington and the other in Rome, apply the venerable techniques of Washington reporting to unearth the Pope's secret role in bringing about the end of Communism—what they portentously term 'the hidden history of our time'. . . . The results are nonetheless not entirely enlightening. Mr. Bernstein and Mr. Politi, who has covered the papacy for 19 years, amass an impressive array of facts about the inner workings of the Vatican, the Pope's early life and dealings between the Pontiff and President Reagan's emissaries. But their principal assertion—that the Pope and President Reagan combined in a covert alliance to bring about the end of Communism—is largely unsupported by the evidence of their book."

Stephen Engelberg, *NYTBR*, Sept. 29, 1996: 10.

KALLMAN, CHESTER. See AUDEN, W. H.

KENNEDY, JOHN F. See ONASSIS, JACQUELINE KENNEDY.

KIMBERLIN, BRETT

The Deeply Weird American Journey of Brett Kimberlin. Mark Singer. New York: Knopf, 1996. 381 pp. $25.00.

"Why didn't Mr. Singer put his discovery [that his central character was a "liar of substantial proportions"] earlier in the story? Presumably, because it would have made 'Citizen K' a much shorter book. Such a book would not have had room for the exhaustive and sometimes exhausting account of Mr. Kimberlin's forays through the American legal system that seems to take up Chapters 1 through 34, for the page after page devoted to the minutiae of his prosecution for the bombings, for all the journalistic hard labor that Mr. Singer may have seen as a kind of penance for being taken back in 1992 [when Kimberlin claimed to have sold drugs to Dan Quayle].

But such a book would have been terrific.

Ben Yagoda, *NYTBR*, Nov. 10, 1996: 10

KLEMPERER, OTTO

Otto Klemperer: His Life and Times. Vol. II. *1933–1973*. Peter Heyworth. New York: Cambridge UP, 1996. 486 pp. $39.95.

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"Heyworth meticulously provides the logbook of Klemperer's professional career: the performances—and the cancellations, at times almost one on one—the recording sessions, the rehearsals, the managerial business, the pros and cons of press notices, and the preferred repertory: Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Bruckner, Brahms, Mahler; and the Mozart, Verdi, and Wagner operas, for he wasa theater conductor above all. Apart from this information, the book's sustaining interest is in its running commentary on the conductor's personality disorders, and the eventual triumph over them of his indomitable will. The life, at once tragicomic and heroic, is one of the strangest in music history."

Robert Craft, *NYRB*, Oct. 31, 1996: 22.

Laing, R. D.

The Wing of Madness: The Life and Work of R. D. Laing. Daniel Burston. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1996. 275 pp. $35.00.

"Mr. Burston intends not to bury Laing but to assess him. Laing's personal and intellectual agony betokens an exemplary role in the cultural history of the century, but for reasons different from the sometimes grandiose ones that Mr. Burston gives to make his case. . . . Despite his attentiveness to the structuring of the role of contrasts in the formation of the identity, Mr. Burston's tired reliance on notions of the self's authenticity, garnered from Laing's often tawdry rhetoric, suggests that, like Laing, he is unable, or unwilling, to integrate this paradox into his thinking."

Peter Meisel, *NYTBR*, Sept. 8, 1996: 13.

". . . Daniel Burston of Duquesne University argues that Laing already deserves serious reassessment, and even claims that his work approaches the importance of Freud's and Jung's. The biographical part of the book takes up barely two thirds of it, and leads on to a close examination of Laing's theories and influences."

Rosemary Dinnage, *NYRB*, Nov. 14, 1996: 30.

Lamartine, Alphonse de

Correspondance inédite d'Alphonse de Lamartine. Vol. 1. *1817–Feb. 1848.* Ed. Christian Croisille. Paris: Nizet, 1994. 318 pp.

This first volume contains over 250 unpublished or hard to find letters, mostly from Lamartine, except for the correspondence between the poet and his wife. A carefully edited volume that successfully fills some of the gaps left by prior publications.

Patrick Berthier. *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France* 3 (1996): 508–9.

Lean, David

David Lean: A Biography. Kenneth Brownlow. New York: St. Martin's, 1996. 804 pp. $40.00.

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"Kenneth Brownlow, the film historian and author of 'The Parade's Gone By,' a classic study of the silent cinema, shares with Lean a fondness for large enterprises, fastidiousness, and a certain old-fashioned reticence about intruding his point of view. The two men are well matched in Mr. Brownlow's gratifyingly comprehensive 'David Lean: A Biography,' which is told mostly in the words of Lean, his colleagues and his former wives."

Diane Jacobs, *NYTBR*, Oct. 20, 1996: 23.

LEE, ROSE

Rose Lee: A Mother and Her Family in Urban America. Leon Dash. New York: Basic, 1996. $23.00.

"Dash, a *Washington Post* reporter, spent four years chronicling Rose Lee's life for a series that won the Pulitzer Prize and that, expanded for this powerful book, is an attempt to understand the underclass that has grown up in our ghettos. He brings the reader into Rose's life as she saw and lived it."

The New Yorker, Oct. 14, 1996: 100.

LE GALLIENNE, EVA

Eva Le Gallienne: A Biography. Helen Sheehy. New York: Knopf, 1996. 531 pp. $37.50.

"[Compared to Robert Shanke's *Shattered Applause: The Lives of Eva Le Gallienne*] Ms. Sheehy's Le Gallienne is an intellectually and emotionally rigorous artist. Her mother is possessive but utterly supportive. Her vanity is largely an excess of her professionalism, and she is true to her sexuality despite the laws and prejudices of the day.

Of the two writers, Ms. Sheehy has the advantage in terms of research: she had full access to Le Gallienne's diaries, scrapbooks, scripts, and unpublished manuscripts. She lets Le Gallienne's words and thoughts take center stage and her prose glides along at a courteous, stately pace. Nevertheless, I think that she is too reverent and pious—so determined to give us a portrait of a heroine and role model that the darkness and the suffering are muted, rendered into soft, gentle focus."

Margo Jefferson, *NYTBR*, Oct. 27, 1996: 7.

LISZT, FRANZ

Franz Liszt. Vol. III. *The Final Years, 1861–1886.* Alan Walker. New York: Knopf, 1996. 594 pp. $50.00.

"[Walker's] prose is characterized by a good sense of the overall tale and a superb chronological rhythm. I particularly admire his choice of the salient issues. . . . What Walker chooses to cover he covers well: Liszt's daily life and his relations to the people closest to him. . . . One musicologist has applied the words 'tiresome and superficial' to

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Walker's work. Far from it: you can't help but keep turning the pages, wondering how it will all turn out; and Walker's accumulated readings of Liszt's music have to be taken seriously indeed. Now that *Franz Liszt* is done, musicology will of course chip away at its inaccuracies and exaggerations, but we will also start to think of 'Liszt after Walker,' much as of late we talk of Verdi after Budden."

D. Kern Holoman, *NYRB*. Nov. 28, 1996: 35.

Lovecraft, H. P.

H. P. Lovecraft: A Life. S. T. Joshi. West Warwick, RI: Necromonicon, 1996. 704 pp. $40.00.

"S. T. Joshi's *H. P. Lovecraft: A Life* overflows with information, both in and out of footnotes and appendices; in addition to a virtually day-by-day account of Lovecraft's life, it contains a history of gothic literature, excerpts from Lovecraft's unpublished letters, essays, and travel pieces, and, among other inspired passages, a description of New York City in 1924 and how it must have looked to Lovecraft's wondering eyes when he first journeyed there, embarked on his brave and unlikely marriage. The biography is so organized that, as Joshi suggests in his introduction, a reader may skim or skip entirely sections of relatively little interest to him or her."

Joyce Carol Oates, *NYRB*, Oct. 31, 1996: 46.

Loy, Mina

Becoming Modern: The Life of Mina Loy. Carolyn Burke. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1996. 494 pp. $35.00.

"The curious life of Mina Loy (1882–1966) is told in detail for the first time in Carolyn Burke's faithful biography, which should help to renew interest in Loy, her poetry, and her few surviving works of art. Loy was a born writer and a born artist: the frustration of her talent—a frustration due in part to her temperament, in part to her lack of education, in part to sexism, and even in part to her beauty—makes a perplexing tale."

Helen Vendler, *NYRB*, Sept. 19, 1996: 57.

McNamara, Robert

The Living and the Dead: Robert McNamara and Five Lives of a Lost War. Paul Hendrickson. New York: Knopf, 1996. 427 pp. $27.50.

"Even though he discerns another more sensitive side to Robert McNamara, Paul Hendrickson wasn't in an especially forgiving mood . . . when he wrote 'The Living and the Dead.' While giving Mr. McNamara due credit for his virtues and abilities, Mr. Hendrickson at times goes after his subject as if he were collecting evidence for a war crimes tribunal, interspersing his highly personalized account of the rise and fall of Robert McNamara with harrowing portraits of

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five people whose lives were turned inside out by 'McNamara's war.' Witnesses, if you will."

Nicholas Proffitt, *NYTBR*, Sept. 29, 1996: 8.

MADAULE, JACQUES. See CLAUDEL, PAUL.

MALLON, MARY

Typhoid Mary: Captive to the Public's Health. Judith Walzer Leavitt. Boston: Beacon, 1996. 331 pp. $25.00.

"Leavitt segues from Mallon's story to contemporary issues, discussing the quarantining of HIV-positive individuals in Cuba and touching on the question of isolating those with drug-resistant tuberculosis in the United States."

Janet Golden, *Women's Review of Books* 14.2 (Nov. 1996): 8–9.

MILLER, NANCY K.

Bequest and Betrayal: Memoirs of a Parent's Death. Nancy K. Miller. New York: Oxford UP, 1996. 199 pp. $22.00.

"Combining literary criticism with her own memoir about the deaths of her parents—her mother of lung cancer at 68, her father of Parkinson's at 82—Miller's book is a discerning study of a contemporary subgenre: the memoir about dead parents. . . . The use of memoir to convert deep veins of resentment into acceptance, if not forgiveness, is the core of Miller's book."

Alix Kates Shulman, *Women's Review of Books* 14.3 (Dec. 1996): 7–8.

MONTAIGNE, MICHEL DE

Montaigne: Une vie, une oeuvre, 1533–1592. Donald Frame. Trans. J.-C. Arnould, N. Dauvois, and P. Eichel, with the collaboration of C. Blum, M. Meijer, and A. Tournon. Preface and bibliography F. Rigolot. Paris: Honor Champion, 1994. 467 pp. F340.

"Donald Frame's text and notes of 1965 have not been altered in this French translation, but in a prefatory note Frame indicates the changes he would make if he were rewriting Montaigne's biography more than twenty years on. François Rigolot's preface situates Frame's biography in relation to trends in Montaigne criticism since 1965 which run counter to a mimetic interpretation of the *Essais*. He also updates the bibliography to 1992."

David Maskell, *French Studies* 50.3 (July 1996): 323.

Sur la mort d'un ami. Michel de Montaigne. Presented by France Quéré. Coll. "Les Carnet." Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1995. 68 pp. F52.

Montaigne's letter is well-known. It enlarges our understanding of the bonds uniting the two friends, and of the attitude towards death existing in the Christendom of the time. This narrative, and similar ones, reporting the deaths of say Pascal, Descartes, or Racine, show

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that in a way, the praise of the deceased is a praise of the "good" death. Regrettably F. Quéré does not grasp very well that the death ritual is imposed by the chosen form of a literary narrative.

Bulletin Critique du Livre Français 569–70 (Feb.-Mar. 1996): 287.

Morris, William

Collected Letters of William Morris. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1996. Vol. 3, 1889–1892: 440 pp., $45.00. Vol. 4, 1893–1896: 392 pp. $45.00.

"These [sumptuously produced] volumes of correspondence cover the last years of Morris's life, when he seems at times to have been totally lost in some dream of the past."

Peter Ackroyd, *The New Yorker,* Sept. 23, 1996: 90–95.

Ochs, Phil

There But For Fortune: The Life of Phil Ochs. Michael Schumacher. New York: Hyperion, 1996. 386 pp. $24.95.

"Mr. Schumacher has written a heartfelt portrait of Ochs' life and times."

Robin Lippincott, *NYTBR,* Sept. 15, 1996: 31.

Onassis, Jacqueline Kennedy

Jack and Jackie: Portrait of an American Marriage. Christopher Anderson. New York: Morrow, 1996. 400 pp. $24.00.

All Too Human: The Love Story of Jack and Jackie Kennedy. Edward Klein. New York: Pocket Books, 1996. 406 pp. $23.00.*Jacqueline Bouvier: An Intimate Memoir.* John H. Davis. New York: Wiley, 1996. 208 pp. $24.95.

Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis: The Making of a First Lady: A Tribute. Jacques Lowe. Los Angeles: General Publishing, 1996. 128 pp. $30.00.

"Of the four recently published Jackie books, Christopher Anderson's 'Jack and Jackie'—which sketches the childhoods of both, then focuses on the marriage—is the most worth reading. . . . Mr. Anderson, the author of books about Madonna and Mick Jagger, comes the closest to making Jackie sparkle.

'All Too Human' by the journalist Edward Klein examines much the same material that Mr. Anderson does, but through a moist, Harlequin-romance haze. The general tone is conveyed by the chapter and section titles: 'Pleasure First,' 'Indiscreet,' 'Love Lies Bleeding' and, more obscurely, 'Bongo, Bongo, Bongo'. . . .

John H. Davis is a career Jackie cousin—he spent summers with her as a child, and has written three books about Jackie and the Bouviers. The latest . . . which covers her life until her first wedding, is enlivened by the fact that Mr. Davis obviously loathes Jackie's mother and includes many nasty details about her. . . .

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Jacques Lowe's 'Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis' is a book of photographs, accompanied by a brief text. Mr. Lowe took some of the most famous pictures of the couple. . . . Above all, Jackie was fabulous in photographs, so paging through Mr. Lowe's book is a pleasure—that is if you can forget what she herself thought of people who liked to look at her. After being stared at all night at the inaugural ball, Jackie compared her guests to 'mesmerized cattle.'"

Larissa MacFarquhar, *NYTBR*, Sept. 1, 1996: 5.

PERKINS, ANTHONY

Split Image: The Life of Anthony Perkins. Charles Winecoff. New York: Dutton, 1996. 496 pp. $24.95.

"Such a life requires a biography of taste, insight and intelligence, qualities glaringly absent from Charles Winecoff's first book, 'Split Image.' Mr. Winecoff has industry—he lists nearly 300 interviews—but his presentation consists in serving slabs of direct quotations (much of it lascivious gossip) between slices of inept prose (he seems to believe 'admits' is a synonym for 'says'). In place of explanation, Mr. Winecoff substitutes imagination: virtually every page contains 'perhaps,' 'one can imagine,' 'must have been.' All in all, a thoroughly tacky job."

Michael Anderson, *NYTBR*, Sept. 29, 1996: 21.

PERON, EVA

Eva Peron. Alicia Dujovne Ortiz. New York: St. Martin's, 1996. 325 pp. $25.95.

"Dujovne, whose insightful biography is marred by the lack of sources for material that is often controversial, and by an irritating Argentine penchant for psychobabble, is invaluable when she is narrating Evita's act of self-creation."

Alma Guillermoprieto, *The New Yorker,* Dec. 2, 1996: 98–107.

PICASSO, PABLO

A Life of Picasso. Vol. 2. *1907–1917.* John Richardson with the collaboration of Marilyn McCully. New York: Random House, 1996. 500 pp. $55.00.

". . . the unflagging passionate insight . . . makes Mr. Richardson's enormous new tome (and his crucial choice of some 1,000 black-and-white illustrations) as luminous as it is instructive. It joins other grand English-language biographies of our time—Leon Edel's 'Henry James' and Nicholas Boyle's 'Goethe' come to mind—in the replete characterization of a fully creative human existence."

Richard Howard, *NYTBR*, Nov. 17, 1996: 9–10.

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Presley, Elvis

Elvis: The Ultimate Album Cover. Paul Dowling. New York: Abrams, 1996. 160 pp. $24.95.

"One needs an obsessive interest in Presley, or record marketing, or both, to enjoy this book. Still, one can't help but admire Mr. Dowling's passion."

Judith Newman, *NYTBR*, Nov. 17, 1996: 24.

Proust, Marcel

L'impossible Marcel Proust. Roger Duchne. Coll. "Biographies sans masque." Paris: Robert Laffont, 1994. 845 pp.

The biographer of Mme de Sévigné, Mme de Lafayette, La Fontaine, and Ninon de Lenclos, Duchne provides an original and knowing look at Proust's life. Organized in short chapters, this important volume is very accessible and establishes an important dialogue between Proust's life and his writings.

Luc Fraisse, *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France* 3 (1996): 519–20.

Riefenstahl, Leni

A Portrait of Leni Riefenstahl. Audrey Salkeld. London: Cape, 1996. 312 pp. £18.99.

The subject is made "the repository of the author's unenacted fantasies. . . . Salkeld reduces her subject's part in Nazism's *belle epoque* to the level of trivia. . . . It flattens to nullity a landmark life of our time."

Glen Newey, *TLS*, Sept. 23, 1996: 31.

Robinson, Jackie

Stealing Home: An Intimate Family Portrait by the Daughter of Jackie Robinson. Sharon Robinson. New York: HarperCollins, 1996. 288 pp. $24.00.

Jackie Robinson: An Intimate Portrait. Rachel Robinson. New York: Abrams, 1996. 240 pp. $29.95.

"'Stealing Home' is a paean to the former baseball great's achievement on the field, in public life and at home. . . .

Rachel Robinson is even less revealing [than her daughter] in 'Jackie Robinson: An Intimate Portrait." Her book, written with the journalist Lee Daniels, is basically a celebratory picture album. The photographs, many drawn from the Jackie Robinson Foundation archives, portray Robinson's rise from teenage stardom in the Pasadena, Calif., school system to his legendary baseball career and subsequent work as a civil rights activist. Many are exceptional. In addition, the foreword by Roger Wilkins puts Jackie Robinson's achievements in balanced perspective."

Mel Watkins, *NYTBR*, Nov. 3, 1996: 18

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ROCKEFELLER, NELSON

The Life of Nelson A. Rockefeller: Worlds to Conquer, 1908–1958. Cary Reich. New York: Doubleday, 1996. 875 pp. $35.00.

"'Too much money,' Abby Aldrich Rockefeller once warned her second son, 'makes people stupid, dull, unseeing and uninteresting. Be careful.' She needn't have worried. As Cary Reich's vivid, compelling, oversized account of Nelson Rockefeller's first 50 years makes clear, he was none of the above. But what he was—beyond being bright and tireless, enormously charming and furiously ambitious—is harder to assess after his death."

Geoffrey C. Ward, *NYTBR*, Nov. 3, 1996: 10.

ROTHSCHILD, MEYER

Founder: A Portrait of the First Rothschild and His Time. Amos Elon. New York: Viking, 1996. 208 pp. $24.95.

"Despite his lucid prose and intelligent judgments, Mr. Elon can't entirely paper over a paucity of information about this first Rothschild. Not one trustworthy painting of him has survived, and neither chatty family correspondence nor his letters to noblemen capture the man. Unavoidably, the book's background is far more brilliantly colored than the pale blurry figure in the foreground. Occasionally, he assumes a far more vivid shape. . . . [But the paucity of these] convincing glimpses of Rothschild in all his modesty and magnificence—his perch in the world always a precarious one—make us mourn the more keenly the lacuna of the early archives."

Ron Chernow, *NYTBR*, Oct. 27, 1996: 50.

RUSSELL, BERTRAND

Bertrand Russell: The Spirit of Solitude, 1872–1921. Ray Monk. New York: The Free Press, 1996. 695 pp. $35.00.

"Bertrand Russell lived until the age of ninety-eight, and at the end of the six hundred pages of the first volume of Ray Monk's biography he is only forty-nine. Yet Monk is a pleasantly economical writer and at no point does the story drag or seem unnecessarily drawn out. The length is justified, for Russell was an articulate genius who followed several independent careers, each fully documented, even in this first half of his life."

Stuart Hampshire, *NYRB*, Nov. 28, 1996: 39.

SARRAUTE, NATHALIE

Nathalie Sarraute, portrait d'un écrivain. Texts collected by Nathalie Sarraute and Annie Angremy. Published on the occasion of the exhibition presented by the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Galerie Colbert, Paris, 13 April-May 27 1995. 64 pp. Illustrated, 13 plates. F140.

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The book presents some hitherto unpublished texts; that is its main interest. But being at once erudite and attractive, with an apparent but calculated disorganization, it also gives the reader the sensation of lifting the veil from the intimate life of that woman, with respect and modesty.

Bulletin Critique du Livre Français 569–70 (Feb.-Mar. 1996): 287–8.

SIMENON, GEORGES

Simenon. Edited, revised, and augmented by Pierre Assouline. 1992. Coll. "Folio" 2797. Paris: Gallimard, 1996. 1,064 pp. Bibliography, filmography, names and works index, bibliographical notes. F55.

An inexhaustible writer, publisher, talker, fornicator, Simenon has something excessive abou t him. In this very detailed book, Assouline sets out to reconstruct this tumultuous life, while denouncing some deep-seated legends, like the one of the novelist writing in a glass cage. For this pocket collection, he adds some annexes, for example, one on the origin of the name Maigret. "It reads like a novel": here lies the familiar failing of biographies in which the works appear as a mere function of the life.

Bulletin Critique du Livre Français 569–70 (Feb.-Mar. 1996): 284.

STEGNER, WALLACE

Wallace Stegner: His Life and Work. Jackson J. Benson. New York: Viking, 1996. 472 pp. $32.95.

"This is a biography that gives a more convincing view of Stegner's pettiness than of his loyalty and courage, of his crochets than of his art. At the close, we feel we have just been shown not Wallace Stegner but John Wayne with an itchy writing finger."

James Kincaid, *NYTBR,* Nov. 10, 1996: 69.

STEWART, JAMES

James Stewart. Donald Dewey. Atlanta: Turner, 1996. 512 pp. $24.95.

"Donald Dewey's 'James Stewart' is a thorough and engaging walk through Mr. Stewart's life and films, the most complete biography of him yet written."

David Freeman, *NYTBR,* Sept. 15, 1996: 20.

TRUTH, SOJOURNER

Sojourner Truth: A Life, a Symbol. Nell Irvin Painter. New York: Norton, 1996. 370 pp. $28.00.

"The picture that emerges from this forthright biography is hardly that of an uncompromised standard-bearer of black womanhood. But as Ms. Painter points out, Sojourner Truth was no patsy. When she was needed, she was there for herself, her family, and her people. The

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great strength of Ms. Painter's biography is its understanding of how Isabella slowly, if completely, sloughed off the weight of slavery, mastered herself and employed the camouflage of race—native wit rather than book learning, quaint dialect rather than fine elocution, ramrod posture rather than feminine demeanor, severe dress rather than fashionable attire—to make herself a symbol of womanhood of a certain sort."

Mira Belin, *NYTBR*, Sept. 22, 1996: 29.

VERLAINE, PAUL

Verlaine d'ardoise et de pluie. Guy Goffette. Coll. "L'un et l'autre." Paris: Gallimard, 1996. 166 pp. F98.

The title evokes the poet's dear Ardennes, where he liked to immerse himself after some excesses in Paris. It also suggests intimacy rather than facts, and indeed the book does not initiate, it revisits. It is a communion, happily renewed after forgetfulness. It spreads an exhilarating mist of existence over a haze of melodious words. A treat.

Bulletin Critique du Livre Français 569–70 (Feb.-Mar. 1996): 286.

WAT, ALEKSANDER

Aleksander Wat: Life and Art of an Iconoclast. Tomas Venclova. New Haven: Yale UP, 1996. 359 pp. $35.00.

"Mr. Venclova's admirable study interweaves biographical chapters with detailed textual analysis of key works, many of which are translated *in extenso.* Some English versions leave something to be desired, but Mr. Venclova provides concise introductions to the artistic and political movements discussed."

Norman Davies, *NYTBR*, Sept. 8, 1996: 30.

"[This] book is in part a biography, relying on and supplementing the memoirs of Ola and Aleksander. But it is also a work of literary criticism. Venclova's book closely analyzes Wat's poetry and prose. As he does so, he sets Wat's development as a writer—his sudden transformations, his long silences, his indistinct and Aesopian utterances which were devised to outwit the censors, his magnificent outbursts—against the cultural and political development of Poland and Russia during the terrifying decades between the Bolshevik Revolution and the decay of Stalinism after 1956."

Neal Ascherson, *NYRB*, Nov. 28, 1996: 4.

WEBB, CONSTANCE. See **JAMES, C. L. R.**

WEST, REBECCA

Rebecca West: A Saga of the Century. Carl Rollyson. New York: Scribner's, 1996. 531 pp. $35.00.

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"Maybe West wrote too much; extreme fecundity is often thought to preclude excellence. Maybe she specialized too little; extreme variety also arouses skepticism. But neither excess can settle the question of West's stature, which remains ambiguous more than a decade after her death. It is likely to stay that way in spite of Carl Rollyson's thorough and engrossing biography 'Rebecca West: A Life.' Mr. Rollyson, who has also written biographies of Lillian Hellman and Norman Mailer, bestows praise on just about everything she wrote."

Walter Kendrick, *NYTBR*, Oct. 27, 1996: 28.

WHITE, STANFORD

The Architect of Desire: Beauty and Danger in the Stanford White Family. Suzannah Lessard. New York: Dial, 1996. 334 pp. $24.95.

"'The Architect of Desire' is a gentle moving book, an inquiry into the psychology of architecture and the structure of family. Ms. Lessard is a great-granddaughter of Stanford White, and she grew up around Box Hill, the White family's estate on Long Island, 'a beautiful place' where, as she puts it, 'there was peril and terror.' The complex emotions she felt about 'the Place,' as the family called the 60-acre estate in the village of St. James on Long Island Sound reflected the reality of her celebrated ancestor, at once a gifted artist and a monstrous human being."

Paul Goldberger, *NYTBR*, Nov. 3, 1996: 7.

WOOLF, VIRGINIA

Virginia Woolf. Hermione Lee. London: Chatto and Windus, 1996. 892 pp. £20.

"Lee has taken on Bloomsbury, lesbianism, madness et al., and has emerged triumphant. . . . This is a marvelous new biography of Woolf, by far the best since Quentin Bell's more intimate account of his aunt in 1972. . . . Hermione Lee sets out to politicize Woolf, to smash the ethereal stereotype forever."

Helen Simpson, *TLS*, Sept. 20, 1996: 28–9.

ZOLA, EMILE

Correspondance. Vol. X. *Oct. 1899–Sept. 1902.* Ed. Dorothy E. Speirs and John H. Walker. Under the direction of B. H. Bakker. Assoc. Ed. Owen Morgan. Literary advisor Henri Mitterand. Historical intro. Jean-Yves Mollier. Analytical index of periodicals Danielle Le Nan. Montreal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal et Editions du C.N.R.S., 1995. 648 pp.

This is the tenth and last volume of the Franco-Canadian edition of Zola's correspondence. In the reviewer's opinion, this collection is the only "intelligent biography" of the author.

Alain Pags, *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France* 3 (1996): 514–6.

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Collections, Group Biographies, and Works of Interest

AMERICAN CELEBRITIES

The Devil Problem and Other True Stories. David Remnick. New York: Random House, 1996. 404 pp. $25.95.

"Mr. Remnick portrays with equal panache a variety of writers, scholars, politicians and others, many of them enduring crises or transitions of their own. . . . Mr. Remnick is remarkably skilled at conveying the distinctive textures of individual personalities. At the same time, he avoids striving unduly to make his subjects attractive."

Paul Weissman, *NYTBR,* Sept. 8, 1996: 22.

BRITISH MONARCHS

The War of the Roses: Through the Lives of Five Men and Women of the Fifteenth Century. Desmond Seward. New York: Viking, 1995. 416 pp. $26.95.

"In this lively book, a historian deftly uses biography to track down history through the dynastic struggles that occupied England for thirty years and in 1460–61 wiped out more than a third of the peerage."

The New Yorker, Aug. 12, 1996: 73.

GERMAN RESISTANCE

Plotting Hitler's Death: The Story of German Resistance. Joachim Fest. New York: Metropolitan Books/Holt, 1995. 419 pp. $30.00.

"'Plotting Hitler's Death' (capably translated by Bruce Little) is directed not at specialists but, in Mr. Fest's words, at 'a broader audience with a general interest in history,' with the aim 'not so much to convey new information as to recount an old story in the light of the latest research'. . . . What is new, Mr. Fest suggests, is the context of the drama, and he provides a comprehensive view lacking in more specialized studies. Indeed, apart from a book by the doyen of resistance studies, Peter Hoffman, there is no good general account of the German resistance. Mr. Fest's new study now fills that gap admirably."

Jeremy Noakes, *NYTBR,* Nov. 10, 1996: 64.

GUNPOWDER PLOTTERS

Faith and Treason: The Gunpowder Plot. Antonia Fraser. New York: Nan A. Talese/Doubleday, 1996. 347 pp. $27.95.

"Antonia Fraser, with her usual combination of careful scholarship and a nose for a good subject, has told the plotters' story. It is such a good yarn that one wonders why nobody has tried to popularize it before."

Michael Elliott, *NYTBR,* Oct. 27, 1996: 13.

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"Like terrorist schemes in our own times, the Gunpowder Plot was both cruel and crackpot, but Fraser does a wonderful job of conveying to the modern reader just why a few Catholics felt it was justified and also likely to succeed."

The New Yorker, Nov. 11, 1996: 119.

NUNS

Sisters in Arms: Catholic Nuns Through Two Millennia. Jo Ann Kay McNamara. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1996. 751 pp. $35.00.

"Without exactly stating it as her intention, Ms. McNamara gives us a history of women's rights—by focusing on women religious since the birth of Christ."

Antonia Fraser, *NYTBR*, Oct. 13, 1996: 16

PIRATES

Under the Black Flag: The Romance and the Reality of Life Among the Pirates. David Cordingly. New York: Random House, 1996. 296 pp. $25.00.

"Mr. Cordingly, a former curator at the National Maritime Museum in England, teases out fact from fiction (stories about buried treasure and plank walking are bogus), even as he acknowledges the power of myth."

Amelie Southwood, *NYTBR*, Sept. 15, 1996: 31.

PRESIDENTS

Hail to the Chief: The Making and Unmaking of American Presidents. Robert Dallek. New York: Hyperion, 1996. 232 pp. $22.95.

"Mr. Dallek considers five traits to be essential: vision, pragmatism, persuasiveness, charisma and credibility. Unfortunately, these properties are so broad that they are as applicable to student-body presidents as to Presidents of the United States. . . . 'Hail to the Chief' seems hastily written; Mr. Dallek packs as much as he can into each sentence, as if punctuation would slow him down."

Douglas A. Sylva, *NYTBR*, Sept. 29, 1996: 21.

REPUBLICANS

The Inheritance: How Three Families and America Moved from Roosevelt to Reagan and Beyond. Samuel G. Freedman. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996. 464 pp. $27.50.

"In a stunning feat of empathy, Freedman has transformed election statistics into a human experience."

The New Yorker, Nov. 25, 1996: 87.

"I salute the timely, incisive book [Freedman] has written. But the reader should be aware that in this account of three emblematic families . . . 'The Inheritance' does not tell the whole story of how 'America moved from Roosevelt to Reagan and beyond.'"

James M. McPherson, *NYTBR*, Sept. 22, 1996: 15.

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Lifelines

Biography and Source Studies 2 (1996), edited by Frederick R. Karl, a recent AMS Press release (56 East 13th Street, New York, NY 10003), contains articles by Fred Kaplan on his Henry James biography; Edward Butscher on his life of Sylvia Plath; Carole Klein on her quest for Doris Lessing; Judith Mara Gutman on Alfred Stieglitz; Brenda Wineapple on the Steins; Gloria Erlich on Hawthorne and Wharton; Charles Molesworth on poststructuralist biography; Gail Levin on Edward Hopper; and Karl on Brodkey's *The Runaway Soul.*

19th-Century British Women Writers: Contributors are sought to write individual entries for a Greenwood Press reference work on 19th-century British women writers. Each entry will be divided into four parts: biography, major works and themes (as well as a general synopsis of how this author fits into the larger issues of Victorian literature and gender studies), critical reception, and a two-part bibliography (works by and about the author). Entries will be between 1,000 and 1,400 words. For further information, contact the volume editor: Abigail Burnham Bloom; 54 Riverside Drive 15D, New York, NY 10024; (212) 724-9031; abiga52088@aol.com.

Call for Papers: *Autobiography and Neuroscience.* For a Spring 1998 special issue, *a/b: Autobiography Studies* seeks 25-page papers on theoretical issues and applications of recent memory and brain research. DEADLINE: 15 July 1997. CONTACT: Thomas R. Smith, English Dept., Pennsylvania State University, Abington-Ogontz, 1600 Woodland Road, Abington, PA 19001; (215) 881-7543; fax: (215) 881-7317; email: trs8@psu.edu.

Call for Papers: *William Carlos Williams and His Biographers.* For the 1998 MLA Convention, the William Carlos Williams Society seeks abstracts or 8–10 page papers. DEADLINE: 1 Oct. 1997. CONTACT: Peter Schmidt, English Dept., Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, PA 19081; email: pschmid@swarthmore.edu.

Call for Papers: *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* seeks submissions for a special issue on "Institutions, Regulation, and Social Control," slated for publication in summer 1999. The issue will address the ways in which life is shaped by multiple intersecting systems and processes of social, psychological, cultural, and political regulation, and resistances to this regulation. Multidisciplinary analyses and collaborative scholarship are welcome. DEADLINE: October 31, 1997. Contact: *Signs*, "Institutions, Regulation, and Social Control," Box 354345, University of Washington, Seattle, WA 98195-4345; (206) 616-4705; fax (206) 616-4756; signs@u.washington.edu.

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Contributors

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Debra B. Bergoffen (Review of Keefe and Smyth, *Autobiography and the Existential Self*) is Professor of Philosophy and Women's Studies at George Mason University. She has written extensively on issues in continental philosophy and feminist theory, and is the author most recently of *The Philosophy of Simone de Beauvoir: Gendered Phenomenologies, Erotic Generosities* (SUNY Press, 1997).

Julie D. Campbell ("M. F. K. Fisher and the Embodiment of Desire"), received her Ph.D. from Texas A&M University, where she teaches literature and writing. In addition to biography/autobiography studies, her research interests include Renaissance literature, especially Shakespeare studies, and women writers' participation in Renaissance literary circles.

Michael L. Forman (Review of Basso, *The Last Cannibals*) is Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Linguistics, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

Kenneth M. George (Review of Dening, *The Death of William Gooch*) is Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of Oregon. He is the author of *Showing Signs of Violence: The Cultural Politics of a 20th Century Headhunting Ritual* (U of California P, 1996).

Joanne Lafler ("The Will of Katherine Maynwaring") is an independent scholar affiliated with The Institute for Historical Study (San Francisco) and the National Coalition of Independent Scholars. A theater historian, she is the author of *The Celebrated Mrs. Oldfield: The Life and Art of an Augustan Actress* (Southern Illinois UP, 1989). She lives in Oakland, California.

Donald Maddox (Review of Landes, *Relics, Apocalypse, and the Deceits of History*), Professor of French and Italian at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, is President of the International Courtly Literature Society.

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Biography is a forum for all well-considered biographical scholarship. The aim of *Biography* is to stimulate the critical judgment of life-writing by presenting new information, sharper definitions, fresh interpretations, and well-argued evaluations.

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Published by the University of Hawai'i Press for the Biographical Research Center.

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ISSN 0162 – 4962

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1984

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Editor's Note

If our submissions over the last few years are any indication, the field of life writing is expanding, becoming more international and diverse. Articles are as likely to come from Sociology and Anthropology departments as from the traditional English and History departments; or to come from Scandinavia, South East Asia, or the Middle East as from Ohio or Ontario. As an interdisciplinary journal, *Biography* can only welcome this change, and our future issues will reflect it.

Whatever the author's department or place of residence, though, a *Biography* essay should still foreground life writing's importance to an enhanced understanding of the persons, texts, events, or cultures under discussion. Take for instance the articles in this issue. John Howard Wilson's essay on Paul Schrader's *Mishima* examines how the director drew extensively on biographical, literary, and cinematic sources to compose a very different sort of biopic. Georgia Johnston shows how Virginia Woolf's "Sketch of the Past" emerges not simply from an interplay between past and present experience, but also between her current literary works in progress, including a far more coventional biography of Roger Fry. John F. Keener explores the convergence of biographical and conspiratorial narratives in the posthumous "life" of Lee Harvey Oswald—in print, on stage, and on the screen. Finally, Axel Nissen describes how his own study of life-writing theory shaped his strategy for writing a biography of Bret Harte.

Though the essays' topics are themselves diverse—a film about a Japanese novelist; a memoir of sorts, written at the same time as a friend's biography; images of an assassin, all but unmoored from the tug of fact; and the essayist's own biography of a literary figure—the question of how lives are represented, and how such representations fare in the world, is still the writers' compelling concern.

This concern will continue to inform *Biography*, even as its contents happily range farther and farther afield.

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Harmony of pen and sword: in his study, in the uniform of the Shield Society, Mishima (Ken Ogata) plans publicity for his final action. *Copyright © 1985 The M Film Company.*

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Sources for a Neglected Masterpiece: Paul Schrader's *Mishima*

John Howard Wilson

Mention biography and most people think of books like Boswell's *Life of Johnson* or the current best-seller. Biography also has a long and distinguished history in film, however, dating back before Abel Gance's *Napoleon* (1927). In recent years, biopics have often won the Oscar for Best Picture—*Patton* (1970), *Gandhi* (1982), *Amadeus* (1984), and *Braveheart* (1995)—and Robert De Niro was named Best Actor for *Raging Bull* (1980). Absorbing as they are, most of these films rely on the same basic structure, employed most famously in the pseudo-biopic *Citizen Kane* (1941). The opening sequence introduces a problem, faced near the end of the subject's life. Once the audience has been engaged, the film flashes back to the beginning of the subject's career. The narrative becomes chronological, working toward the time of the film's opening and at least a partial resolution of the problem. Though a few films, like *Hoffa* (1992), flash forward, jumping from past to cinematic present, the basic and entirely predictable structure remains in place, especially in mediocre films like *MacArthur* (1977). Favorite patterns may sometimes change, adding variety to the cinematic means of representing a life, but screenwriters seem unable to do without the flashback.

Paul Schrader is a film theorist, screenwriter, and director with a long record of innovations in biography. In both the fictional *Taxi Driver* (1976), which he wrote, and *American Gigolo* (1979), which he wrote and directed, the narrative centers on an individual character, presented in the manner of a straight biopic. Schrader also wrote *Raging Bull*, which follows a conventional flashback pattern to present the story of Jake

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LaMotta. In two unproduced biographical screenplays, however, Schrader begins to depart from the standard pattern. In "Six Scenes from the Life of Hank Williams," written in 1979, Schrader "took six separate months from a five-year period and focused on the things that happened in those months" (*Schrader* 127). The film was never made, but Schrader learned from the experience that scenes from an artist's life could alternate with examples of the work. Then in 1984, Schrader wrote *Gershwin*, a "damn good script" consisting of "nine approximately chronological thematic chapters with titles like 'Women,' 'Classical,' 'Hollywood,' 'Psychoanalysis,' and so on" ("Dialogue" 21). Shot in black-and-white, a chapter would last about ten minutes (*Schrader* 130), to be followed by a "color coda" ("Dialogue" 21), a "musical section in different formats by different artists, a Gershwin song which would encapsulate that theme. So after 'Women' it would be 'I Just Can't Get Started' and after 'Psychoanalysis' it would be 'How Long Has This Been Going On?'" (*Schrader* 130). In 1989 Schrader estimated that *Gershwin* would cost at least $25 million, "not a good investment at that budget" ("Dialogue" 21). Further, Warner Brothers owned the rights to the music, and refused to "relinquish the script because that means relinquishing the possibility of their making the more conventional Gershwin film they would like to make" (*Schrader* 130). Schrader concluded that *Gershwin* is "much too experimental to get made" ("Dialogue" 21).

Before he wrote *Gershwin*, Schrader had finished filming *Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters* (1985), with a budget under $6 million. One way to appreciate *Mishima* is to consider what it is not. Few Western biopics treat Asian subjects, and those that do are often excoriated as biography, history, and film, as *Gandhi* has been by Salman Rushdie (102–6). Though Rushdie doesn't mention it, one of the most annoying qualities of such films is the strategy of Western mediation. In *Gandhi*, for example, the Indian hero is played by a well-known English actor, Ben Kingsley. All the dialogue is in English. And Martin Sheen and Candice Bergen improbably appear as journalists, whose sole purpose is apparently to goggle at Gandhi's holiness. *Mishima* is different. The Japanese actor Ken Ogata plays the title character. Though he says a few words in English at a press conference, the dialogue is almost entirely in Japanese, with

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English subtitles. No fawning Americans follow him around. In fact, the only blatant mediation is the English voice-over, sensitively spoken by Roy Scheider. As Rushdie notes, the mediation in *Gandhi* leaves the character relatively tame, with simplified politics and nonthreatening ideas, such as nonviolence (105). Schrader suggests that if we are truly to begin to understand the subject, we have to enter his world—his experience, his language, his creations, and his ideas, including his interest in violence.

Mishima won a special jury prize at the Cannes Film Festival and drew praise in the Sunday *New York Times*, *Sight and Sound*, and *American Film*. In general, though, critical reaction, as in the *New York Review of Books*, the *New York Times*, the *New Republic*, the *National Review*, and *Art in America*, tended to be negative. Whether due to the critics or not, *Mishima* "did not do as well as it deserved to at the box office" (Lewis 93). Today, though video guidebooks are respectful, *Mishima* is little known. Part of this neglect may be because *Mishima* isn't "likely to make much sense to anyone who hasn't read some of the novels," as Vincent Canby claims (C4), and while the film does stand on its own, familiarity with the author's life and work improves understanding of *Mishima*. Unfortunately, the extended contemplation which serious films like *Mishima* require is often not possible for movie critics writing under pressure. When directed to the many types of sources integrated into this entertaining and challenging film, such attention reveals not only the filmmakers' skill and sophistication, but also certain qualities which may ultimately lead to the recognition of *Mishima* as a model biopic.

* * * * *

"Opening sequences lend a film a very strong sense of authorship," and this is certainly the case with *Mishima* (*Schrader* 147). The titles, in English, include a table of contents listing four chapters—Beauty, Art, Action, and Harmony of Pen and Sword. The names of three novels, chosen to illustrate the first three ideas, also appear. Some viewers found the idea of chapters "pretentious," but without the titles, at early screenings, "people didn't understand what the point was." Schrader then added the table of contents, a "handbook for watching this kind of film" (Jaehne 16). Next we see a house, a garden, and a statue.

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In a bedroom, Mishima wakes, uses the phone, cancels breakfast, and inquires about the children. He shaves, reads the paper, drinks coffee, and looks toward Tokyo. These scenes amount to a "meticulous representation of the dull, banal commonplaces of everyday living," the first element in Schrader's "transcendental style" (*Transcendental* 39). The mood begins to change in the next shot, as the music swells and Mishima lays out the uniform of the Shield Society, the private army formed in his last years. Man, clothes, and mirror echo scenes in *Taxi Driver*, *American Gigolo*, and *Raging Bull*, but in *Mishima* these elements introduce "disparity," or "disunity between man and his environment which culminates in a decisive action," the second element in a transcendental style (*Transcendental* 42). As the character inspects himself, the film shifts to black-and-white, a groan comes up on the sound track, and Mishima's face is covered by a noh mask, a kendo mask, and an oxygen mask. Appearing over three seconds, the three distinct images startle the audience and announce that realism is not the film's only representational style.

Those who have read Mishima will remember *Confessions of a Mask*, his first important novel. The noh mask suggests Mishima's predisposition to play various parts, as explained in *Confessions*. Mishima admired actors and wrote modern versions of noh plays; an actor is one of the central figures in *Kyoko's House*, the novel that will illustrate art in the movie. While the kendo mask alludes to Mishima's skill in martial arts, it also refers to the kendo champion in *Runaway Horses*, the novel chosen to represent action. The oxygen mask comes from *Sun and Steel*, a memoir describing Mishima's flight in a jet fighter, depicted near the end of the movie. With dazzling efficiency, Schrader thus outlines the whole story, compares Mishima's life and art, introduces central images to be examined, and prepares the audience for sudden shifts in style.

After getting dressed, Mishima leaves the house, watched by a boy in a window of the house next door. The boy turns out to be the five-year-old Mishima, watching his adult self on his way to committing suicide. This juxtaposition provides a convenient bridge back to childhood, as *Mishima* follows the familiar flashback structure, but employs startling contrast in place of a gentle fade. This sequence demonstrates how Schrader blends sources, even to the point of appropriation.

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Henry Scott Stokes, a biographer who reported that Mishima's father had watched his son leave the house on the morning of his suicide, may have suggested this shot. Scott Stokes entitles the first section of his biography "The Last Day," and like the movie, it begins with Mishima waking, shaving, dressing, and so on. So similar are the movie's opening scenes that Scott Stokes filed complaints in March 1985, six months before the film's American release, claiming that "substantial amounts" of Scott Stokes's "invented dialogue" were "used in the film" (Maslin). For instance, in the biography Mishima tells one of his followers to "Take these out to the car. I will be out in a moment. Read the letters now!" (10). In the film, Mishima says "Read these in the car. I'll be right out." This rough similarity was not enough to infringe upon copyright, especially since the English appears in subtitles. As for the lawyer's claim that Schrader followed Scott Stokes's "ordering of facts" (Maslin), there is a correspondence, but both the biography and the film are versions of actual events. Furthermore, for cinematic purposes, Schrader introduces some new details, such as the masks, and alters others, such as the person in the window. Mishima and his followers also sing in the car on the way to their "action," a detail not from Scott Stokes's biography, but from John Nathan's (274). Though Schrader and crew looked at the sources available to Scott Stokes, they also did "a lot of original research," including interviews and "trial records" (Jaehne 12). To plan the structure of *Mishima*, Schrader and his brother Leonard had gone "to Mexico, with two suitcases of books" (Thomson). Scott Stokes's biography was probably among them. While Scott Stokes's lawsuit was "withdrawn" (Jaehne 12), by first pressing it, one source had identified himself.

With the second shot of the boy in the window, the film changes back to black-and-white. The boy sees other boys playing in the street, but his ailing grandmother tells him to close the curtain and rub her legs, thus intensifying Mishima's interest in the forbidden action, while presumably skewing his sexuality. As part of the technique for creating a cinematic biography, *Mishima* employs three distinct styles. The hero's final day seems "like newsreel," with "bleached colors, much hand-held camerawork and fast cutting" (Rayns 258). The past appears in black-and-white, honoring the "Golden Age of the Japanese cinema" (*Schrader* 177). Shots are "usually framed at

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low angle," and the camera is "generally static" (Indiana 40), as in the films of Yasujiro Ozu, one of three directors studied in *Transcendental Style*. Scenes from Mishima's novels are "sumptuously filmed in saturated colors on highly stylized sets." All three styles appear in each of the film's four chapters, where they are linked by theme rather than by "chronology or narrative" (Rayns 258). In this way, the four chapters and three styles create a "complex tapestry" (Segers 55). Although part of this structure probably resulted from the fact that Schrader was working with actors speaking Japanese, it is still clear that as a "schematic film," *Mishima* depends far more on "writing and directing" than acting (Thomson). Schrader saw himself as a "chess-player," sitting before a "board of characters" arrayed against the "cultural and linguistic gulf." And by showing his capacity for "enormous calculation, and the ability to see a pattern," Schrader made a film which not only reflects the nature of its director, but also that of its subject (Rayns 259).

Most of the black-and-white scenes are based on *Confessions of a Mask*, Mishima's most autobiographical novel. Although his widow thought that its violence and homosexuality made much of *Confessions* unsuitable for the film (Thomson), Schrader not only used scenes from *Confessions*, but he "treated them as pure autobiography" (Scott 40), even soliciting testimony and securing the executor's approval. Though Schrader claims there is "no fiction" in the "biographical sections" (*Schrader* 182), at least two episodes seem to be interesting adaptations of Mishima's writing. The narrator of *Confessions* mentions that his grandmother goes to kabuki (6), but he doesn't accompany her. However, both Nathan and Scott Stokes note that Mishima's grandmother did take him to the theater (Nathan 26; Scott Stokes 52), as she does in the film. As they sit in the lobby, a door opens, revealing an *onnagata*, a male actor specializing in female roles. The twelve-year-old Mishima is entranced, and his grandmother observes that the "theater is very stimulating" and that he is "old enough now." While the scene reiterates Mishima's interest in acting, it also invokes the ambiguity of his sexual awakening. The same concerns also characterize Mishima's long friendship with the *onnagata* Utaemon, and appear in "Onnagata," his short story of homoeroticism and betrayal. After the theater scene, Schrader reinterprets the battle with Omi from *Confessions*. Mishima confronts an older boy

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standing on a fence. They grapple and fall to the ground. In the novel, the boys stand on a log and afterward walk arm-in-arm to class (65–71). In the film, Omi walks off, leaving Mishima alone and facilitating transition to the next sequence. Here and elsewhere, then, various sources inspired scenes, but the filmmakers freely adapted their material.

Chapter 1 continues to explore beauty by turning to the novel *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion*. This sequence begins with the novel's title and a close-up of the stuttering acolyte Mizoguchi. As the youthful Mishima fades into the fictional character, thus connecting life and art, the style establishes contrast, as black-and-white shifts into brilliant color. This technique took some time to develop. Schrader had intended to shoot the scenes from novels on video, but the results "looked too ugly," and he "had to find something else to set against the film's more realistic elements." When he "decided on high-concept design," he recruited Eiko Ishioka, who had published *Eiko by Eiko*, a collection of "advertising concepts for the Parco shopping centers in Tokyo" (Rayns 259; Scott 40). Since Eiko had never done a movie set, she needed help from Kazuo Takenaka, a "Toho [Motion Picture Company] veteran who worked on most of [director Mikio] Naruse's later films," and who was designing the biographical scenes for *Mishima* (Rayns 258). Schrader felt that "no one's life is quite as vivid as their fantasies, and that's particularly true of an artist." Since he had "to go into those fantasies in order to realize their potency" (Rayns 259), Eiko's theatrical sets became the means for conveying the power of imagination. Because *Mishima* is "such a jigsaw," each novel sequence is "color-coded to make the film a little more comprehensible" (*Schrader* 177). The scenes from *The Temple* are green and gold, with much of the action played before a painted backdrop, predominantly gold with green lily pads and mountains, resembling a Japanese screen. The small-scale model of the golden pavilion itself is movable, creating a sense of disproportion and instability.

To fit three novels into a two-hour movie, Schrader had to simplify the stories. Although John Simon accused him of having turned them into "comic strips" (70), the essence of each novel is captured in a few scenes. In only fifteen minutes *The Temple* sequence presents Mizoguchi's friendship with another student, his impotence with women, his obsession with the

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golden pavilion, his disappointment in the end of the Second World War, his evening with a prostitute, and his decision to destroy the temple. In addition, Schrader links life and art by inserting four black-and-white scenes into this sequence. Schrader cuts from Mizoguchi, fixated by the temple's beauty, to the twelve-year-old Mishima's discovery of Guido Reni's painting *St. Sebastian*, as described in *Confessions* (37–41). Aroused by the beauty of the martyr's body—hands tied above his head, arrows digging into his sides—Mishima masturbates and has his first orgasm. Then a cut back to *The Temple*: distracted by the golden pavilion, Mizoguchi proves unable to fondle a woman's breast, in a scene of distraction and impotence reminiscent of Mishima's rubbing his grandmother's legs. Life and art both reflect Mishima's homosexuality, his inability to alter sexual preference, his tendency to turn art into a fetish, and his impulse to destroy the object of desire, the same characteristics also found in the narrator's relationship with Omi in *Confessions*, and in Mishima's own bodybuilding and self-destruction.

Art also flows into life when Mizoguchi predicts that American bombers will destroy the temple and Schrader cuts to the eighteen-year-old Mishima in an air raid, as described in *Confessions* (132–4). Though Mishima had already started to write, he "dreamed only of joining the war and dying for the emperor," wanting "to explode like a rocket, light the sky for an instant and disappear." Perhaps trying to explain his own oddity, but probably asking for sympathy from the woman who replaced his grandmother, Mishima then gives his mother a hostile review of his writing.[1] Despite his expressed death wish, in the film as in *Confessions* (135–40), Mishima pretends to have tuberculosis in order to avoid military service. Wondering why he lied and echoing the novel, the film's narrator concludes that "words were lies," that he "never really wanted to die." At this point, Schrader cuts back to *The Temple* and news of peace, with the golden pavilion still intact. Mizoguchi visits a prostitute and tells her he will be famous, she calls him a "terrible liar," and he proceeds to burn down the golden pavilion. Though written fifteen years before Mishima's suicide, *The Temple* expresses the same doubts about words and faith in action which will be developed in *Sun and Steel*. The film emphasizes the dichotomy, as it follows the train of thought that led Mishima

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to destroy himself. In this and many other instances, while discarding much of the novel, Schrader brings out the central themes and forges links between life and art. Biographical films tend to remain on the outside looking in, exploring the minds of their subjects only through memory or dream. While Schrader makes use of these tools, scenes from the novels are another way into the mind of Mishima—a means of representing imagination, as well as the past.

Chapter 2, Art, marks a return to Mishima's last day, as he tells three followers not to commit suicide. What in chapter 1 seems like the destruction of beauty becomes in chapter 2 an exercise in aesthetics. As the conspirators drive across town, they pass a poster of Mishima promoting his last work of fiction. Mishima looks into an alley, the film turns to black-and-white, and the narrator remarks that at the end of the war Mishima felt "left behind." He gazes at copies of *Confessions*, receives literary prizes, and produces a noh play, but he covets translation in the West. The scene ends with Mishima sitting alone at his desk, isolated by his art. Such scenes are favored by Schrader, who attributes them to Robert Bresson, the second director studied in *Transcendental Style.* In conventional films, boy invariably meets girl. Both Bresson and Schrader examine the "existential hero" in "'a man and his room' stories"—heroes who lead "intense, solitary lives," subscribe to an almost "monastic ideal," and try to subdue the body (*Schrader* 163–4).

Because the novel dramatized in chapter 2, *Kyoko's House*, had "never been translated into English" (*Schrader* 177), Mishima's widow did not expect Schrader to use it. But he did, though it meant depending on his brother Leonard and sister-in-law Chieko as cowriters. For this sequence, Schrader adopted "lurid colors," predominantly pink and gray, which led Gary Indiana to compare it to the "'50s Cinemascope gangster films like Nicholas Ray's *Party Girl*" (41).[2] It's only a small step from such films to the themes of "sexual ambivalence and narcissism" which characterize *Kyoko's House* (*Schrader* 178), in part the story of an actor named Osamu who wants to be "more muscular, like a matador." (The novel's three other major characters are only incidental in *Mishima*.) In bed with a woman, Osamu vows to become a bodybuilder, but she straddles him and calls him a "weakling." The woman holds a mirror in front of her hair, her face, and her breast, and the audience sees her reflection

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superimposed on Osamu. Two genders are integrated in one body, as the mirror implicitly reflects the viewer's own confused identity. Since the idea for this scene came from *Performance*, Nicolas Roeg's 1970 film starring Mick Jagger, it is appropriate that Kenji Sawada, a "rock star, a kind of Mick Jagger in Japan," was chosen to convey Osamu's "sexual ambiguity" (*Schrader* 211, 181).

As in chapter 1, Schrader ties the novel to Mishima's life. The scene in bed leads to a homosexual night club, and the narrator compares himself to an actor who wears a mask and plays a role. Actors and homosexuals fear "decay of the body," and when a dancing partner feels that Mishima is "flabby," Mishima walks out and returns to his room, later asking the younger man not to "make jokes like that again." The scene depicts Mishima's uneasy entrance into the homosexual underworld, part of his research for *Forbidden Colors* (Nathan 105–7; Scott Stokes 103–4). One of the few indications of homosexuality in *Mishima*, the scene was "filmed during the crew's final week in Japan." The Mishima estate allowed it, the "renowned transvestite 'actress' Miwa" having "filed an affidavit claiming the incident was biographically true" (Scott 40). Even so its presence in the film is remarkable: in commercial biopics, homosexuality is anathema, because it undercuts the subject's strength and normality.

In roughly chronological order, the next sequence shows Mishima's six-month trip around the world in 1951–52 (Nathan 109–15; Scott Stokes 105–7). Again the narrator mentions the dichotomy between words and the body, recalling that Greece cured his "self-hatred and awoke a will to health." Mishima saw that "beauty and ethics are one and the same. Creating a beautiful work of art and becoming beautiful oneself are identical."[3] In the next shot, Mishima is in a gym doing sit-ups in front of a mirror. He started swimming in 1952, tried boxing in 1953 and 1954, and took up weightlifting in 1955, an avocation described at length in *Sun and Steel*. Mishima famously "maintained a regimen of three workouts a week for fifteen years and allowed nothing to interfere" (Nathan 124). The film explains this behavior, showing us Mishima's vulnerability and narcissism, his need to become beautiful, and his understanding of the body as a work of art. Mishima hits the showers, and the film returns to *Kyoko's House*, where Osamu is also showering

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and inspecting his reflection. He too has become a bodybuilder, caught in a debate between two friends. An experienced bodybuilder asserts that the "human body is the work of art," but an artist replies that because the "most beautiful body is soon destroyed by age," it follows that "only art makes human beauty endure." Osamu simply listens, as the camera circles the three characters. Other characters circle more rapidly in the background, and the effect is vertiginous, the visual equivalent of the dialogue's dizzying ideas.

Osamu's mother can't make the payments on her tea shop, so an enforcer pays a visit. When Osamu tries to use muscle to protect her, the thug thrashes him. Once Osamu falls to the floor, the set is withdrawn. As one critic notes, Eiko's designs "frequently split apart or collapse with terrific drama" (Indiana 41). The dissolution of the set coincides with the deflation of Osamu's dreams. He then pulls out a mirror to check the damage. This scene recalls Schrader's first screenplay, *The Yakuza*, a story about Japanese gangsters. Partly for his mother's sake, Osamu agrees to sell himself to Kiyomi Akita, the older woman who owns the tea shop. Then a cut to biography, with the narrator noting that a "writer is a voyeur par excellence." Having come "to detest this position," Mishima tried to become "not only the seer, but also the seen." Mishima is shown posing for photographs later published in an album called *Punishment by Roses*. Such pictures appeared throughout the 1960s; Schrader includes the famous image of Mishima as St. Sebastian, and posters for two of Mishima's movies, a yakuza flick called *The Tough Guy* and a popular piece of swordplay called *The Assassins* (Nathan 172, 253). Though almost all artists labor in obscurity, a few achieve celebrity. According to Schrader, Mishima "realized he could be more famous and influential as a media personality than as an author. Not only that, he *embraced* that idea, he loved it. And then he carried it to the ultimate extreme, where he turned his death into theater" (Ventura 6).

The *Kyoko's House* sequence continues to unfold with a high-angle shot of a narrow corridor at a theater, set against a black background. The "camera dips down into these sets from a towering vantage point, recalling courtesan prints and [director Kenji] Mizoguchi movies" (Indiana 40). Though the focus is on Osamu with his mother, the characters and setting recall the scene with Mishima and his grandmother at kabuki.

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Osamu has at last landed a good role, a "surprise." He will play opposite Akita-san, in a pink room shaped like a four-leaf clover, outlined in black and viewed from a high angle. Schrader came to call it "the *Mishima* shot," referring to "little glowing rooms" that "simulate the writer's vision" (*Schrader* 195–6). Osamu removes his shirt, revealing the cuts and burns Akita has inflicted on him. He can no longer go to the gym, while people at the theater are still having the "same boring discussions" about the "wounds of art." Concluding that "art is a shadow," Osamu decides that "stage blood is not enough." Akita takes out a rope and a knife, and the scene comes to an end. This brief narrative suggests that Mishima also grew bored with art, prompting forays into popular culture and, eventually, the exhibition of real blood.[4]

Chapter 3, Action, opens with Mishima and his followers singing in the car, choosing duty over sympathy. Arriving too early, Mishima tells the driver to make a loop. In the next two shots, Cadet Morita turns to stare at a woman standing at the gate to the base. The only cadet to commit suicide with Mishima, Morita seems to be compared with Isao, the young hero of *Runaway Horses*. Isao is a kendo champion, who like Osamu believes that "wooden swords have no real power." Disgusted with Japanese materialism in the early 1930s, Isao seeks help from an army officer. Isao hopes to "assassinate the leaders of capitalism" and then "commit seppuku," at "sunrise, on a cliff, paying reverence to the sun, looking down on the sea." Schrader then cuts to Mishima practicing swordsmanship, as the narrator reinvokes the "harmony of pen and sword," a "samurai motto," which was formerly a "way of life," though "now it's forgotten." Wondering if art and action can "still be united," the narrator concludes that "harmony can only happen in a brief flash, a single moment"—ideas scattered through Scott Stokes (149, 191), but also in Mishima's own *Sun and Steel* (49, 51). In virtually the same words that Scott Stokes quotes from a magazine article (135), the narrator notes that men died young in the classical period: "Heaven must have been beautiful then; today it must look dreadful." Bound to "die of decay," with "no chance to die beautifully," a man over forty "must compel himself to live." How then to unite beauty and action? While Mishima excelled in art, he came to doubt its relevance, but as his admiration for action grew, he tried to take two paths that

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seemed to diverge. Schrader's choice of novel for this section suggests that Mishima reconciled art and action in *Runaway Horses*.

But not as Isao initially hoped, for the officer tells him that the plot is "too dangerous." When he addresses his fellow students, Isao therefore says that they have "no plan, no hope, nothing." And yet he asks if they are "still willing to pay the price," though they "may accomplish nothing." Many are, and a visibly moved Isao leads a recital of vows to rid the nation of "capitalist evils" and "restore his Imperial Majesty." Schrader then shifts to Mishima's own formation in 1968 of the Shield Society, a pseudo-military band of students, which supposedly would shield the emperor (Nathan 229). Symbolic action is clearly central to the group's identity. Apparently based on a scene from Scott Stokes (205–6), Mishima signs his name in blood and proposes a "blood toast." Mishima's creativity and public role coalesce when, at a parade of the society, he is asked not to use the "National Theatre for a private political party." While the theater allows him to "create art in the dark," his new society enables him to "create action in the sunshine": "Who would have thought you could still combine them?" (Nathan 253–5).

People worry that access to the theater will allow him to do both, but Mishima soon learns that for all his efforts, making the two one was a difficult task. Though warned about the press, Mishima knows that he has "always looked ridiculous": when he walks "on stage determined to make the audience cry," the result is just the opposite, and "Instead, they burst out laughing" (Scott Stokes 275). The Shield Society had hoped "to restore the noble tradition of the Way of the Samurai," as Mishima explained at a press conference (Scott Stokes 240–1), but they were dismissed as "toy soldiers" (Scott Stokes 209). His 1969 invitation from the United Student Front to a debate at the University of Tokyo aroused the same expectations and disappointment (Nathan 248–50). The narrator speaks of an approach to the "realm where art and action converged. For a moment I felt alive." But as he enters the hall, the camera pans to a caricature of Mishima as a bodybuilder. In perhaps the most telling of the biographical scenes in the film, Mishima's project founders, just as Isao's plot fails. Though brave and committed, he is judged ridiculous whenever he tries to be

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serious. His accomplishments become jokes, and his vitality seems diminished. If art and action were to be brought together, it would only be temporarily and in extremity.

But Mishima had to write *Runaway Horses* before Schrader could represent it, a point made by a transitional scene. Back at his desk, Mishima "felt empty," as he described himself near the end (Scott Stokes 260), but "again came the words, effortlessly, urgently. Again the rehearsal began." And again *Runaway Horses* returns, as Isao goes to kill the country's leading capitalist, Kurahara. The villain appears in front of a huge, decadent, Western-style painting. The lighting changes, and we see Isao slash the painting from behind. He enters and kills Kurahara, then runs to the beach, but as he prepares to commit seppuku, we hear the Japanese pronunciation of "Cut!" and the film shifts back to biography. Such distinctions, however, are no longer simple, for this scene also involves fiction and film. Mishima is making *The Rite of Love and Death*, his 1965 film based on "Patriotism," his 1960 short story. He is playing the part of the army officer who commits seppuku. Mishima pushes the retractable blade into his belly, anticipating his final act in 1970. At a press conference for the film, Mishima claims that he "couldn't survive" if he "didn't continue writing one more line." That line comes when we return to Isao, about to drive the knife into his stomach. Thus art and action are almost inextricably entangled, as a fictional character, by taking his own life, imitates his creator, who had rehearsed his own suicide while portraying another of his creations.

The fourth chapter, Harmony of Pen and Sword, is the simplest in structure and the easiest to follow. This format may arise in part from the controversial nature of its contents. Because many have argued that Mishima's suicide was insincere, and because anyone who resists American imperialism is automatically dismissed as a "crackpot" (Indiana 41), some critics have attacked Schrader for even attempting to turn such a life into a film. In chapter 4, no novel is dramatized, and Schrader concentrates on Mishima's last day. Though the results are well-known, the sequence is nevertheless gripping, as themes from previous chapters manifest themselves in action. Both in action and location the film faithfully reproduces the historical record. As Mishima enters the headquarters of the Self-Defense Force, Schrader cuts to a

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shot of the Shield Society in training—based loosely perhaps on *Sun and Steel* (59–61). Seeking "ultimate verification" of his existence, the narrator speaking for Mishima vows to act on the "stage of Japanese tradition," with "no more rehearsals." Schrader's script thus reminds us that Mishima's action was appropriate for a Japanese warrior.

The film returns to the last day, as Mishima takes a hostage, repels a counterattack, and addresses the garrison. When soldiers disrupt his speech, the narrator breaks in, paraphrasing *Sun and Steel*: "Never in physical action had I discovered the chilling satisfaction of words. Never in words had I experienced the hot darkness of action" (92). Searching for a "higher principle which reconciles art and action," the narrator finds death. The film cuts briefly to a shot of Mishima climbing into a jet fighter, a flight described in "Epilogue—F104" from *Sun and Steel*. Then a cut back to the balcony, where Mishima hears the jet and looks up. And back to the flight, where the narrator describes seeing a "giant circle coiled around the earth, a ring that resolved all polarities, a ring vaster than death. . . . Here was the moment I had always been seeking" (cf. *Sun and Steel* 101–3). Schrader had "planned to use sequences from Mishima's final novel, *The Decay of the Angel*, but dropped the idea" (Rayns 257). As the final cross-cutting suggests, *Sun and Steel*, a work of nonfiction or "confidential criticism" (7), works best, given the spareness of Schrader's account of that last day. Without moving into fiction, *Sun and Steel* still provides Schrader with a source for a "language of the flesh" (12), and even for a relevant myth. In the poem "Icarus," appended to *Sun and Steel*, Mishima asks if he belongs "to the heavens" or "to the earth" (105–7)—a question captured in the shot of Mishima on the balcony, talking to the troops below but gazing at the plane above.

But the army he idealizes rejects him, and Mishima feels he has no choice but to commit seppuku. As "the knife enters the abdominal wall off screen, the lens zooms in and the camera dollies back in the same perceptually disorienting movement that forces the spectator to share the nausea of looking down the bell tower of Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo*" (Scott 41). Then we see Mizoguchi with the golden pavilion burning around him, Osamu lying dead on the floor with Akita, and Isao with the knife in his belly, falling before the rising sun. Though Schrader avoids looking at his own films, he "can still watch

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the end of *Mishima*." When the novelist "becomes one with his three creations," Schrader finds it "just terrific" (*Schrader* 182). The narrator contributes the last sentence of *Runaway Horses*: "The instant the blade tore open his flesh, the bright disk of the sun soared up behind his eyelids and exploded." Then a phrase from one of Mishima's autobiographical essays brings the film to an end, the suicides of author and character "lighting the sky for an instant" (Nathan 49), in the image of the rocket introduced during the air raid. Fiction and nonfiction, pen and sword, end of career and beginning, blend in that third element of Schrader's transcendental style, "stasis," or "a frozen view of life which does not resolve the disparity but transcends it" (*Transcendental* 49).

* * * * *

Cinema tends to absorb other arts, but even by the standards of the genre, *Mishima* draws upon an exceptional range of sources—film, design, theater, history, literature, and biography. The result is a rich and unusual film, obviously the work of seasoned filmmakers. And yet, though a few critics were enthusiastic, most were hostile. Schrader was not surprised: "critics are always crying 'Give me something new. We never see anything innovative.' Then you do something they've never seen the likes of before, and they howl 'What is it?'" Instead of pandering to people "who buy newspapers to have things confirmed that they basically already know" (Jaehne 12), Schrader suggests that critics should "take the time to understand the developments you're proposing," and even try to make "so-called difficult films accessible to [their] readership." But Schrader's problems were not only critical. Possibly after "threats of violence from right-wing groups," who "don't like their hero being appropriated by Americans" ("A Film" 89), the first Tokyo International Film Festival decided to drop *Mishima*. To this day the film has never been publicly exhibited in Japan (*Schrader* 181), thus joining such films as *Citizen Kane* and Oliver Stone's *Nixon* (1995) in the category of controversial film biography—an affront to memory and a provocation to political opponents.

Before he finished *Mishima*, Schrader had written the screenplay for *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988). Part biography, part fiction, that film also generated protest—this

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time around the world. Perhaps what is truly provocative then is Schrader's preoccupation with the theme of "purgation through destruction." He is very conscious of this pattern in his own works: "*Taxi Driver* was suicidal glory in the person of an uneducated man. And *Mishima* was suicidal glory in the person of an educated man. And, of course, *The Last Temptation of Christ* has those same elements." Schrader himself feels that "*Mishima* represented the end of my interest in suicidal glory" ("Dialogue" 20), the "end of what I wanted to say about it" (Ventura 96). His recent films certainly represent a departure from that theme. *Patty Hearst* (1988) was an unusual biography with a "passive protagonist" and an "unconventional stylistic manner." Perhaps because few biopics focus on female subjects, the film was largely ignored (*Schrader* 196). And Schrader wrote and directed *Light Sleeper* (1992), the story of a drug dealer based on an acquaintance (Smith 51). But perhaps Schrader's greatest influence on the making of cinematic biography is evident in the films of other directors. Like *Gershwin* and *Mishima*, *Thirty-two Short Films about Glenn Gould* (1993), for example, is varied in style, organized by themes, and devoted to an artist.

As the public continues to be drawn to what the A&E cable network calls "extraordinary lives," film biography may be generating more interest than published biography. In both books and movies aimed at larger and larger audiences, biography tends to become superficial and sensational, more personal and less scholarly. Only a few exceptions transcend convention and introduce new methods of biographical representation. *Mishima* is one such masterpiece, strangely neglected despite its unparalleled integration of literary and biographical sources. Schrader's techniques do not greatly differ from a writer's: both use narrative frames and flashbacks, cutting between past and present. Both develop distinctive styles and depend on them, though Schrader demonstrates that various styles in the same film can create contrasts and connections. Though hundreds and perhaps thousands may read a very well-received biography, millions often see even an obscure movie. Further, while a five-hundred-page book may take ten or twenty hours to read, a cinematic biography can be no longer than two or three hours. The dangers are obvious. Since more and more biographies are likely to appear on film, videotape, and computer software, and since cable television,

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home video, and the Internet promise more and more outlets for viewing, we need to treasure ambitious and thoughtful biographies, if only to offset the inevitable simplification. Exhibiting a scholar's regard for sources and an artist's sense of beauty, *Mishima* is one of the best, a film whose reputation can only improve.

NOTES

1. Mishima's grandmother died in 1939, and the rights to *Confessions* were left to his mother (Nathan 26; Scott 38).
2. Schrader's fondness for such films is well known. For the 1971 Los Angeles International Film Exposition, dedicated to *film noir*, he chose to screen Ray's *They Live by Night* (1949), and in "Notes on *Film Noir*," Schrader describes Ray as a "psychoanalytically inclined" director, drawn to "psychotic action and suicidal impulse" (*Schrader* 87).
3. The same statements appear in Nathan (115); a less complete version is in Scott Stokes (107).
4. Nathan stresses the connection between Osamu and Mishima (164–8), perhaps the source of Schrader's interest in the character and the novel.

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Virginia Woolf Revising Roger Fry Into the Frames of "A Sketch of the Past"

Georgia Johnston

Models which psychologize autobiography into a unified and retrospective life story still influence critical discourse.[1] These models can be useful for interpreting many traditional texts; one formulation, for example, categorizes the "psychological, spiritual, philosophical, vocational uses to which autobiographical literary modes have been put" (Jay 13), while another treats the forms of autobiography—"historical, philosophical, and poetic"—as reflections of content (Spengemann xii). At least from the perspective of these models, Virginia Woolf's 1939–1941 memoir "A Sketch of the Past" does look "unguarded, uncensored, and relatively uncontrolled," a text in what John Mepham describes as "a raw state" (180). With its emphasis on the act of viewing rather than on "the numbers of different ways in which memoirs can be written" ("Sketch" 64), however, the frame Woolf employs for "Sketch" actually multiplies the psychological content, extending her autobiography beyond classifications that prioritize a coherent and retrospective "I."[2] Woolf uses this frame to pair scenes of her early childhood with "present" writing moments referring to her sister Vanessa Bell, the zeppelin attacks over Britain, and her work on *Roger Fry*, a biography of her friend, the artist and influential art critic.

This "'diary' approach" (Griffin 117) would raise few questions if in fact the frame reflected actual writing moments. Because it was deliberately added in revision, however, the frame not only raises questions of content, but also draws attention to issues of aesthetics, and accounts in particular for the many references to the *Roger Fry* biography-in-progress. Fry had already influenced the structure and discussion of aesthetics

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in Woolf's novels.[3] Through her revisions for "Sketch," Woolf incorporated these aesthetic theories once again, this time applying them along with Fry's theories of perception to the task of formulating the autobiographical self. By emphasizing observed scenes, by doubling past to present, and by validating fiction as truth, Woolf incorporates Fry's theories of a "double life" separated into the "actual" and the "imaginative," his notion of the "spectator" who cannot affect perceived events, and his vision of wholeness and aesthetic unity, which nevertheless undermines the notion of a retrospective, unified subject. By using this doubled, viewing, successively framing "I," Woolf in "Sketch" anticipates current debates in autobiography that question the "mark of the *I*" as a traditional bastion of self-reference.[4] Sidestepping models which valorize a "shape" that is "stamped" and "moulded" by the "machine" of education and profession ("Sketch" 153), Woolf instead displays the interpreting space within the life as of equal weight with its matter.

1. Constructing "Sketch"

Although according to its own internal dates, "Sketch" was written between April 1939 and November 1940, the various unfinished manuscripts, pieced together long after Woolf's death, were not published until 1976. A second edition, published in 1985, added manuscript sections discovered in 1980. Despite "Sketch"'s posthumous appearance, recent critical work on it emphasizes that it would be a mistake to consider the work unimportant. Scholars have read "Sketch" through autobiographical and psychological theory; have discussed it as an intersection of autobiography and culture; and have placed it within the autobiographical tradition.[5] This article will focus on how Woolf's revision process reflects the influence of art aesthetics.

The earliest extant version allows us to gage the extent and nature of Woolf's revisions. It begins with an image of life as completed product:

> If life is a bowl which stands upon a base, it mist stand for me up n two memories; the purpl red and blue flowers of my mothers bacl frock; the sound of waves breaking. ("Sjetch of the Past," *sic*)

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In these first words the bowl, a completed art form, stands as a metaphor for a human life. But Woolf soon moved this passage to the second half of a second paragraph, choosing instead to emphasize first the ongoing combinations in life rather than the notion of completed form. "Two days ago—Sunday 16th April 1939 to be precise—Nessa said," Woolf informally begins her frame, and then recounts a conversation with her sister Vanessa, who "said that if I did not start my memoir I should soon be too old. I should be eighty-five, and should have forgotten" (64). In what proved to be the final version, Woolf continues as if she has casually sat down to write:

> As it happens that I am sick of writing Roger's life, perhaps I will spend two or three mornings making a sketch. There are several difficulties. In the first place, the enormous number of things I can remember; in the second the number of different ways in which memoirs can be written. As a great memoir reader, I know many different ways. But if I begin to go through them and to analyse them and their merits and faults, the mornings—I cannot take more than two or three at most—will be gone. So without stopping to choose my way, in the sure and certain knowledge that it will find itself—or if not it will not matter—I begin: the first memory.
>
> This was of red and purple flowers on a black ground.... (64)

And so Woolf arrives once more at the description of her first memory and the metaphor of the bowl. Having added her frame, however, while still conceiving of the bowl as a product, Woolf also sees it as an intermediate metaphor for a process:

> *If life has a base that it stands upon, if it is a bowl that one fills and fills and fills*—then my bowl without a doubt stands upon this memory. It is of lying half asleep, half awake, in bed in the nursery at St. Ives. (64, emphasis added)

The life she contemplates is still a product, "which stands upon a base," but it also implies a process, since "one fills and fills and fills" it. This modification inverts traditional conceptions of memory, life, and the "I." Customarily textual lives are constructed from experience, standing "upon a base" of experience rather than predating it. Woolf's revised image suggests that the life she seeks to represent is filling and filling and filling

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even as she tries to record it. Her formal introduction of the spaces—what Shari Benstock has called the "gaps" (11)—of the writing process, rather than erasing them, is therefore accompanied by a similar change in content which reverses the familiar procedure of autobiography. As Benstock explains, "what is pushed aside" in traditional autobiography "is the split in the subject." In this way "man denies the very effects of having internalized the alienating world order" (15). In "Sketch," though, Woolf introduces the spaces in the subject into the text and, further, emphasizes the processes that create them.[6]

The final manuscript consists of writing blocks, each apparently beginning with the date of composition.[7] But in fact, these framing dates do far more, since they also seem to determine what *framed* past memories will be included. The "May 15th 1939" frame date, for instance, leads the narrator to "May 1895" (85), and in "July 1940" the narrator decides to "try to describe the cage—22 Hyde Park Gate—as it was in July 1897" (116). The gaps in the writing process, announced by the spaces on the page, between the "May 15 1939" and "July 1940" sections, for instance, sharply contrast with Woolf's easy moves between past and present, frame and framed, present "I" and past "I" within each section. In "June 20th 1939," for example, present thoughts about Stella, Woolf's half-sister, easily lead her to memories:

> June 20th 1939. I was thinking as I crossed the Channel last night of Stella; in a very jerky disconnected way, with people quarrelling outside the door; the boat train arriving; chains clanking; and the steamer giving those sudden stertorous snorts. And as the first morning after a broken night is distracted and broken, instead of beginning Roger again, as I ought, I will write down some of my distracted and disconnected thoughts; to serve, should the time come, for notes.
>
> How many people are there still able to think about Stella on the 20th June 1939? Very few. . . . She was the only daughter of the handsome barrister Herbert Duckworth. (95–6)

Just as the "broken night" leads to a "distracted and broken" morning, the framing present moment seems just as inevitably to lead to memories of past scenes.[8] If we remember, however, that Woolf began to add the present frame to completed scenes of the past, the entwining of past and present, of memory and

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the moment of writing is not "distracted and disconnected," nor "unguarded" (Mepham 180), no matter how seemingly casual its production, but instead is governed by an aesthetic devoted to the creation of a doubled, uncentered "I."

This masterful strategy allows Woolf to write autobiography without apparently foregrounding the ego, which she shunned and distrusted—"nothing is so much to be dreaded as egotism," she tells us in "Sketch" (147). Both the dates and the apparent sketchiness of the prose undermine the impact of the narrating "I," who cannot impose the order needed to "work this out; it had better be left to chance" to produce these "notes" (75, 95). Thus by adding the present frame, Woolf not only erects a scaffold for constructing the narrative of the past, but also undermines the coherence of the subject who lived that past. Writing of Maupassant's fiction, Angela S. Moger suggests that "the presence of the frame legitimizes the internal narrative; it is that outer casing which makes the encased material appear to conform to the aesthetic and logical demands of the mechanism known as story" (321). This understanding of frame certainly applies to "Sketch," but Moger's further remarks are even more pertinent. Since the frame is so set and specific, "the principal narrative can remain in the sketchy state that most stimulates a reader's fantasies." Though she is writing about Maupassant, Moger could just as easily be describing Woolf's own search for legitimacy in "Sketch."

The frequent references in the framing passages to *Roger Fry* further advance her own experiments in "Sketch." At least for rhetorical purposes, the Roger Fry biography is what legitimizes and validates Woolf as a serious writer commissioned to produce a family authorized, weighty, public text, with a traditional structure and coherent facade.[9] By repeatedly referring to this biography as her main task, her main text, Woolf can proceed with "Sketch" as if it were secondary and easily discarded. "I have just found this sheaf of notes, thrown away into my waste-paper basket," she offhandedly remarks at one point (100). Though apparently an admission of defeat, of subservience to the dominant textual life of the commissioned biography, the references in the frame to *Roger Fry* actually free Woolf to proceed with her "Sketch" writing as if it were merely inconsequential, if tantalizing, play.[10]

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2. "Sketch" Displaces *Roger Fry*

Woolf undertook the writing of Fry's biography at the request of his family. Despite "a long debate about the book on Roger" with his sister Margery, and Woolf's concerns about whether she "could be free" with the subject (*Diary* 4: 260), she began to gather material in April 1938.[11] As she worked on the text, she described *Roger Fry* as "donkey work" and "drudgery" (*Diary* 5: 133). Even when she "set the last word to the first sketch of *Roger*" on March 10, 1939, she anticipated the revisions would be a "terrible grind" (*Diary* 5: 207).[12] She sent the manuscript to Margery in February 1940, but continued to work on proofs and index through June. *Roger Fry* is published in July; and since the last date Woolf gives for a present writing moment in "Sketch" is "15th November 1940," we can therefore know that between April 1939 and then, Woolf had been working on three texts—*Roger Fry*, *Between the Acts*, and "Sketch."[13]

Tantalizing textual evidence suggests that Woolf deliberately contrasts "Sketch" and *Roger Fry*, thus creating an ironic rivalry between the two projects. Not surprisingly perhaps, in Woolf's diaries, she pits the novel *Between the Acts* against the biography, presumably the "significant" projects foremost in her mind. Within "Sketch" itself, though, the Fry biography is pervasive.[14] Here the clash is not simply a matter of time management. Rather, the conventional *Roger Fry* stands in contrast to the experimental "Sketch." In May 1939, for instance, writing "Sketch" provides "a holiday from Roger" (75), since composing a "coherent life of Roger has once more become intolerable" (85). "Sketch" repeatedly offers a means for avoiding the biography: "instead of beginning Roger again, as I ought, I will write" (95), Woolf remarks, and as she proofreads the final pages of *Roger Fry*, she is "determined to look for these pages" of the memoir (100). Even when her Fry "book is out" (115), its subject still helps her frame "Sketch": "have I not conveyed Roger from one end of life to the other?" (136).

Woolf's many references to her sister Vanessa within the present framing moment also imply textual rivalry with the subject of *Roger Fry*. Vanessa, on whom Woolf depended emotionally, had an affair with Fry which began in 1911. As Panthea Reid Broughton writes, when Woolf "rushed to join

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her ailing sister in Turkey," she discovered Vanessa not in her husband's, Clive Bell's, care, but in Roger Fry's. Woolf's anxiety over this illness, so much like the one that caused their brother Thoby's death in 1906, combined with her deep jealousy for her sister's affection, would have distressed Woolf far more than any feelings she might have had on aesthetic grounds, but as Broughton goes on to note, "Given her hostility to the visual arts and her tendency to dismiss Roger, his centrality must have distressed her" (39). Or put more schematically, a "psychological dynamic that had begun in rivalry (over Vanessa's affections)" escalated into Woolf's resentment of "Fry's influence on Vanessa," and culminated in Woolf's "rivalry with Vanessa/Roger/painting" (41, 57).[15]

Though Woolf's relationship with Fry would change dramatically over the years, these early and complex feelings have their effect on the structure Woolf manufactures to begin "Sketch." As I've already noted, "Sketch" begins with Vanessa urging her sister to write her *own* life, invoking a Vanessa who values Woolf's life as much as the life of her lover, Roger Fry, which Woolf is also writing. The "I" representing Woolf who writes "Two days ago—Sunday 16th April 1939 to be precise—Nessa said that if I did not start my memoir I should soon be too old" presents Nessa's interests in this "sketch" with all the trappings of veracity. To cite this permission to interrupt work on Fry's biography occasionally for the express purpose of writing her own memoir had a great deal of significance for Woolf. For we know the Fry biography mattered a great deal to Vanessa. "'I'm crying cant thank you,'" Vanessa wrote to Woolf when *Roger Fry* was finished, and Vanessa and Duncan Grant, her current lover, "forbid me to alter anything" (*Diary* 5: 271–2). Woolf describes the Fry biography as having "given Nessa back her Roger, lost since Julian [her son] died" (272). Given such evidence of the biography's value to Vanessa, the frame references to her valuing of Woolf's memoir are all the more encouraging.

The most subtle interplay between *Roger Fry* and "Sketch," however, relates to an earlier version of Fry's life that Woolf and Fry had imagined together. In an undated, unfinished sketch of Roger Fry, Woolf records that he "offered to sit for a portrait":

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> He was to talk about himself, and I was to take notes and write a life in which fiction was to be allowed full play—the idea being that it was only by having full liberty to invent and create that a true life could be written." (qtd. in Bartkevicius 129)

In a sense, in "Sketch," Woolf appropriates this method she and Fry had imagined for his biography. One "I" transcribes the activity of a past "I," but a past "I" which also invents and fantasizes. In this way Woolf co-opts the positions of recorder, interpreter, and subject. This creates a number of options. Instead of assuming authority over remembered events, she can "dribble on, purposely letting my mind flow" ("Sketch" 111). To get the truth through impression rather than event, she can fictionalize: "This was a fable on my part; but it shows that [her mother] looked very sad when she was not talking" (82). Woolf can "make up pictures of a summer's afternoon" (87). Or finally she can even include memories which she herself might doubt: "Can I be remembering a fact when I think I remember a long thick fish wriggling on a hook in the larder, and that Gerald beat it to death with a broom handle?" (132).

3. Writing "Sketch"

Though Woolf and Fry valued the experimental, as Woolf repeatedly mentions in her frames for "Sketch," the task of writing *Roger Fry* involved meeting the biographical expectations of both family and general public. The unification of retrospection was therefore the desired and required effect. Though critics disagree about degree, most conclude that *Roger Fry* is a very conventional work. Woolf emphasized fact in *Roger Fry*. Michael Rosenthal describes Woolf as "restricting herself . . . generally to the narrative of Fry's life" (214–5). Elizabeth Cooley concludes that having to work "within those biographical boundaries delineated by her literary fathers," meant that Woolf failed to get beyond an expected form in writing *Roger Fry*: "Factual accuracy and discretion dictated the kind of biography she felt she had to write, yet this kind of biography went against everything she believed about understanding and conveying personality" (81).

Ironically enough, though, by creating a structure in "Sketch" from which she can observe the past "I" from *within*

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the text of her own life, Woolf actually adheres to those theories of aesthetics that Roger Fry himself by 1920 had imagined for art.[16] Fry suggested "the possibility of a double life; one the actual life, the other the imaginative life." The actual life is pragmatic and alert: "the processes of natural selection have brought it about that the instinctive reaction, such, for instance, as flight from danger, shall be the important part." The imaginative life, on the other hand, allows for contemplation and insight: "the whole consciousness may be focussed upon the perceptive and emotional aspects of the experience," leading to "a different kind of perception" (18). For Fry, such textualizing of experience substitutes "perceptive and emotional aspects" for the "instinctive reaction." Chris Richards explains this as a "distinction between seeing and looking" (24). It is also the difference between life and art.

Woolf's framed and frame structure divides textual life into two fields. The frame creates a "platform" ("Sketch" 75) from which to enter that other life, from another time—a life which in the present can only be imagined. By relying on her own theory of "moments of being" to explain Fry's "different kind of perception," Woolf goes beyond his theories. Woolf's "moments of being" are "embedded in many more moments of non-being" ("Sketch" 70). When contemplating such "exceptional moments," despite her imaginative engagement, Woolf feels that the moments themselves "seemed dominant: myself passive" (72). More importantly, Woolf transforms Fry's distinction between the actual and the imaginative life by contemplating "actual" moments in the past which are arresting because of her own chosen passivity. In one such "moment," Virginia Stephen and her brother Thoby are fighting, when she suddenly rejects the "instinctive reaction" of defense for a new type of perception:

> We were pummelling each other with our fists. Just as I raised my fist to hit him, I felt: why hurt another person? I dropped my hand instantly, and stood there, and let him beat me. . . . I had become aware of . . . my own powerlessness. (71)

Here and in all her "moments of being," Woolf certainly draws on Fry's distinction between "perceptive and emotional aspects" and "instinctive reaction" to interpret her past. Sometimes Woolf feels "satisfaction," sometimes "despair"

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("Sketch'" 71), but always she recognizes a newly available ability to perceive which does not simply distinguish between perception and reaction, but which moves beyond the rational into the visionary. Take, for instance, two moments: once when Woolf "was looking at the flower bed by the front door," she suddenly realizes "'That is the whole'" (71); and, on another occasion, Woolf, seeing the apple tree, is all at once aware that it "was connected with the horror of Mr Valpy's suicide" (71).

Woolf's frame strategy thus divides only to link past and present, which exist separately but simultaneously. She therefore rejects a model in which one creates the other through chronological cause and effect.[17] Her vision of the actual and the imaginative lives takes its strength from their simultaneous existence. Woolf also internalizes this process. "There was a spectator in me who, while I squirmed and obeyed, remained observant, note taking for some future revision" (154), Woolf writes, and in this case, this spectator/I division protected her as an adolescent from the dominating cruelty of the household's "Victorian males." Though notoriously she found she "must obey" her half-brother George, "because he had force—age, wealth, tradition—behind him" (154), through spectatorship she found a way to remove herself from those around her.

The idea of spectatorship resembles to a degree Roger Fry's description of what happens when the imaginative life takes precedence over the actual life. Clarity is the prevailing virtue, for Fry claims that we "*see* the event much more clearly," and also that "whatever emotions are aroused" appear to be "presented more clearly to the consciousness" (18, 19). Because we are separate from the event, we can

> abstract ourselves completely, and look upon the changing *scene* as a whole. It then, at once, takes on the visionary quality, and we become true spectators. (Fry 20, emphasis added)

So important is this idea to Woolf that her only explicit reference to Roger Fry the critic (as opposed to *Roger Fry* the text) contrasts his celebration of attentiveness—"Roger Fry said that civilisation means awareness"—with her father's insensitivity—"he was uncivilised in his extreme unawareness" (146).

It is in the notion of the "scene," however, where Fry's aesthetic impact on Woolf crystallizes, only to be transformed. By dividing past and present "I"s, she can manufacture scenes.

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Though a literary construct, the scene is so visual that Diane Gillespie suggests that its "tendency derives as much from painting as from literature" (*Sisters'* 93), and yet the scene is anything but static:

> A scene always comes to the top; arranged; representative... we are sealed vessels afloat upon what it is convenient to call reality: at some moments, without a reason, without an effort, the sealing matter cracks; in floods reality; that is a scene. ("Sketch" 149)

This flooding for Fry accompanies that "different kind of perception" which occurs at the moment we become spectators. Like Fry, Woolf also imagines scenes whole, but for her, such "moments of being" also buttress her aware "I" of the "present"—an "I" which nevertheless also embodies Fry's theory of "a successive unity," which "depends upon the forms being presented to us in such a sequence that each successive element is felt to have a fundamental and harmonious relation with that which preceded it" (Fry 33). The key distinction here, of course, is that for Woolf this theory of aesthetic unity actually describes the sequence of the narration over moments of being.

This is the narrative strategy of "Sketch." By adding her frame and then doubling the "I"s, Woolf creates a series of "moments" of awareness which extend not simply through the narrative, but through the past. Mary Ann Caws has suggested that the frame in twentieth-century texts is often the "repeating moment," the "delay," the "pause" (*Reading* 7, 8). "Sketch" goes one step further: the "repeating moment," the "delay," the "pause" take place in the act of putting down and taking up once more the textualization of the memoir itself. "Pause" and "delay" are the central narrative codes of this frame. The supposedly casual opening—"Two days ago—Sunday 16th April 1939 to be precise—Nessa said that if I did not start writing my memoirs I should soon be too old"—is actually the foundation for her entire narrative strategy. Writing "by fits and starts," Woolf will, for instance, "turn for a few days respite to May 1895," which she then examines from the "little platform of present time on which I stand" (85). Abrupt stops and desultory starts are this memoir's norm, as Woolf finds herself "forced to break off again" (98), or literally having to pick it up once more, as she fishes through "this sheaf of notes thrown

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into my waste-paper basket" (100). Whether precisely real or invented fiction, these pause markers of the "present moment" provide the illusion of a sequential present time which carries through "Sketch."[18] Aesthetically these repetitious pointings to a separate narrative of subjectivity create Fry's "fundamental and harmonious relation" out of separate moments. This harmony, however, does not constitute an integrated self. Possessing little meaning other than as markers, "Sketch"'s moments are undermined just as surely as the bombing attacks of that time are destroying reference points in Woolf's life. In this way, the controlling frame is itself only a textual marker, since the enclosed separate narrative of subjectivity eludes the frame's control, even though that enclosed narrative exists only because of the controlling frame narrator.

Many of the post-impressionists whom Roger Fry championed achieved their fame by rendering their subjects through juxtaposing different spatial perspectives. So did Virginia Woolf extend juxtaposed perspectival viewpoints, differentiating past and present, simply by observing it from a range of presents. In this way, she redefined the literary spectator, and thus heightened our awareness that an autobiographer represents life from a deliberately chosen, always shifting position.

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NOTES

AUTHOR'S NOTE. My gratitude goes to the Louisiana State University Library, where I studied microfilm copies of the archival papers of Virginia Woolf's "A Sketch of the Past"; to the National Endowment for the Humanities, its 1994 NEH summer seminar on "Memory and Life Writing" in which I wrote a first version of this article, and its leader Dr. James Olney; and to my interdisciplinary research group at Saint Louis University—Richard Valantasis, Hal Parker, Ken Parker, Fran Tucker, Matthew Miro, Brian Goldstein, and Marlene Salas-Provance.

1. To cite only one of many examples, James Goodwin in 1993 claimed that "Autobiography is retrospective" (11).
2. Because Woolf includes a frame structure, "Sketch" encompasses all four of the possibilities that Carolyn Heilbrun innovatively designates as ways "to write a woman's life":

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> the woman may tell it, in what she chooses to call an autobiography; she may tell it in what she chooses to call fiction; a biographer . . . may write a biography; or the woman may write her own life in advance of living it. (11)

"Sketch"'s textualization of different reading perspectives suggests an aesthetic of viewing the "I" that makes unification and retrospection into distracting straw men.

3. For thoughts on Woolf's short fiction, see Quick; for Fry's influence on *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*, see Robert, Gloversmith, and Broughton. Thomas Matro argues that Woolf goes beyond Fry's theories when she applies them to her fiction. Similarly Gloversmith writes that "As with Fry's account of how emotions in art differ radically from immediate feelings, so with Woolf's representation of them. The reader is meant to observe the emotion, to reflect at a distance, to go beyond it" (164). To my knowledge, up until now no one has examined Woolf's incorporation of Fry's theories into "Sketch."
4. Both Leigh Gilmore and Jean Starobinski point out the difficulties for autobiographers of reference through language. The "I" is only what Gilmore calls "the mark of autobiography" (7).
5. Psychoanalytic approaches include Benstock's work on the unconscious, Cousineau's Lacanian analysis, and Bernheimer's study of Woolf in terms of Freud's theories of masochism. Cultural analyses include Smith's work on the female body and bourgeois culture, and Dalgarno's discussion of the position of the female subject. And finally, Dahl has traced "Sketch"'s debts to Leslie Stephen's work.
6. See Benstock on the effect of Woolf's incorporation: "what is most striking from the 'Sketch' itself is not the self-reinforcing aspect of the two memories, but the disparity between them." For this reason, such memories "mark not only different psychic moments, but difference itself" (23).
7. The dividing dates are "2nd May" (75), "May 15th 1939" (85), "May 28th 1939" (91), "June 20th 1939" (95), "19th July 1939" (98), "June 8 1940" (100), "*The present.* June 19th 1940" (107), "July 1940" (115), "Yesterday (18th August 1940)" (124), "I continue (22nd September 1940) on this wet day" (126), "I recover then today (October 11th 1940)" (136), and "(15th November 1940)" (143).
8. According to Hilary Clark, for Woolf "narrative becomes a device, not for remembering, but for freeing the present from the past," reason "to both remember and forget, in order to work the past into the present" (1–2). Revealing the power of Woolf's frame, LuAnn McCracken documents how past and present are equally

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important in "Sketch": "Woolf comments on the past from the viewpoint of the present, recording feelings then and now in order to present a balanced view" (72).

9. My concern is not primarily with the actual contrasts between these two texts, but rather with the binary oppositions Woolf identified between them. Diane Gillespie and Ruth Hoberman have both established that *Roger Fry* is much more experimental in undermining the biographer's authority than earlier critics had recognized. While "*Roger Fry* is for the most part structured chronologically" and the chapter headings are traditional (Hoberman 184), Woolf lets "the voice embodied" in Fry's letters and other writings successfully "suppress" Woolf's first person pronoun (Gillespie, Introduction 5). Furthermore, "Fry's letters are linked (or, more accurately, insistently *not* linked) sometimes only by recurring metaphors, sometimes by blatantly awkward transitions that emphasize the portrait's fragmentation and temporal discontinuity" (Hoberman 185). Hoberman concludes that through this "compiling method" Woolf "demasculinize[s] historical writing" (193). Instead, her goal is to "depict the self without exalting egotism, without asserting an exaggerated narrative authority, without simplifying the complex rhythms of a life" (14). I am grateful to Diane Gillespie for referring me to this line of scholarship on *Roger Fry*.

10. This tactic of suggesting that a text is inconsequential also surfaces in *Orlando* (which Woolf called a "joke"). But in her groundbreaking article on *Orlando*'s relationship to Woolf's love affair with Vita Sackville West, Sherron E. Knopp argues that the "things we joke about, after all, are often those we care about too much to risk seriousness" (25).

11. Woolf definitely was restrained. With regard to the family, Margery Fry stated "Now there of course I'm afraid I should have to ask you to be careful" (*Diary* 4: 262), and critics have discussed the "discretion" that kept Woolf from "immersing herself into some of the difficulties of the private man" (Cooley 81, Rosenthal 217). Ruth Hoberman claims that "because Fry's relatives were looking over her shoulder," Woolf proved "even so traditional as to be reticent about his love affairs" (182).

12. Woolf repeatedly calls *Roger Fry* a "grind" (*Diary* 5: 138, 155, 216, 229, 230).

13. Edward Bishop (197–219) has been invaluable for establishing this chronology.

14. Though he is present primarily in Woolf's references to the biography, two references to Fry himself do occur. The explicit one—"Roger Fry said that civilisation means awareness" (146)—

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I will discuss shortly. The implicit reference is a passage which links Cezanne's painting to Woolf's own endeavors. Given Fry's importance as a critic of post-impressionism in general and Cezanne in particular, his ideas are inescapably present: "Yet if one could give a sense of my mother's personality one would have to be an artist. It would be as difficult to do that, as it should be done, as to paint a Cezanne" (85).

15. Many scholars have documented Woolf's dependence on her sister and their relationship's effects on Woolf's fiction. Marianna Torgovnick writes of "[t]he fascination of Vanessa for Virginia and her sense of loving competition with her" (118), a relationship which for Woolf involved "love for and envy of her painter sister" (123). Jane Dunn sees a rivalry left over from the younger Virginia's desire "all those years past to be part of the nursery conspiracy between Thoby and Vanessa" (289). See also Mary Ann Caws's remarkable *Women of Bloomsbury* and Diane Gillespie's *The Sisters' Arts.*

16. Chris Richards gives an excellent account of Fry's aesthetic theories, and David Dowling sets Fry within the critical milieu. See also Berel Lang, who examines Fry's theoretical ambiguities in relation to formalism.

17. In a fascinating cultural interpretation of the doubleness in "Sketch," Sidonie Smith points out that "the assignment of baseness to the body anchors the bourgeois subject" (102). Dividing the text "between the autobiographical subject and the female body" (102), Smith argues that

> the narrative fizzles out in the total paralysis of the subject who cannot escape the social topography of separate spheres, the travesty of sex roles, the gender hierarchy of compulsory heterosexuality, and the social regulations of the body, a subject who cannot escape the sense of distance between herself and her experience. (93)

Though more optimistic, my reading of Woolf's relationship with Fry is not, I think, incompatible with Smith's.

18. We cannot, however, assume that Woolf's framing dates actually correspond with the times of composition; her manipulation of the frame seems to have extended even to the dating. To take only one example, an entry in Woolf's diary reads "rejection . . . routed today . . . by breaking into *P.H.* [*Pointz Hall*, which will later be *Between the Acts*] two days, I think, of memoir writing" (*Diary* 5: 354). This diary entry is from January 26, 1941, two months after the last "date" of "Sketch."

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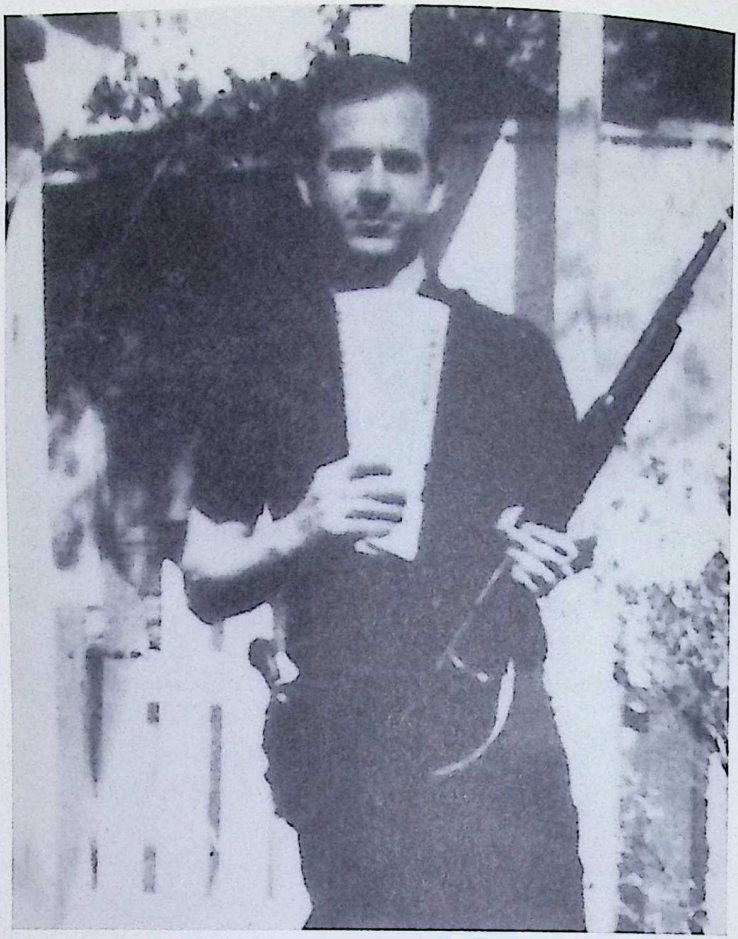

National Archives

"As for Oswald, several points are causing concern:"
Chicago Tribune, December 1, 1963

"WHAT KIND OF MAN WAS OSWALD?"
Washington Post, November 24, 1963.

"Whatever Oswald was . . ."
Washington Post, November 26, 1963

" . . . If you want to sum him up . . ."
New York Times, December 1, 1963

". . . CAREER OF SUSPECT HAS BEEN BIZARRE"
New York Times, Saturday, November 23, 1963

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Biography, Conspiracy, and the Oswald Enigma

John F. Keener

Immediately following the murder of Lee Harvey Oswald on November 24, 1963, Howard K. Smith lamented to a stunned television audience, "We will never hear this man's story. There is something wrong and we do not know what it is" (Panitt 34). Since that day in Dallas, the cavity at the heart of Oswald's story has been filled—and to his satisfaction, one might imagine—by an ever proliferating media life. We certainly know more about Oswald—the histrionic mother and truancy record, the flirtations with Marxism and the military, the pro-Castro politics and defection to the Soviet Union—than Mr. Smith thought possible in November 1963. But Oswald remains a man of contradiction and incongruity, so much so that every narrative of his life, no matter how fervent or dogmatic, must outmaneuver our collective uncertainty about his role in the most significant event of that life, the assassination of John F. Kennedy. As biographical subject Oswald is unique: one of those rare lives whose seminal event comes at its close. He is the central figure in a narrative with no center.

Lee Harvey Oswald exists at the collision point of two antithetical narrative impulses: biography, or the story of a "lone gunman," and conspiracy, or "the plot to kill the President." The first presupposes what Bakhtin calls "biographical time" and predicates individual volition as its causal determinant. While not always strictly linear, its narrative cleaves to a sequential itinerary circumscribed by birth and death. The second submerges the individual life into an historical narrative whose various human components are indistinguishable, indistinct, and sometimes missing. This narrative suggests the parataxis of the evidence room. Neither impulse realizes Oswald's life in a way that seems adequate to the enormity of the Kennedy assassination, which Sanford Pinsker has

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identified as "the 'mother' of contemporary conspiracy theory," leaving in its wake a nation which "seeks a Truth deeper than truth" (621, 624). Narratives that proffer a biographical truth about Oswald do exist. But given his enigmatic and virtual anonymity until the last three days of his life, such narratives generally admit failure or present biography at its reductive worst. For if the function of any assassination text is, in Thomas Powers's words, to "give Kennedy's murder a cause as big as the consequence" (32), Oswald "the lone gunman" remains feckless. Meanwhile, narratives seeking to weave Oswald into the tapestry of a larger conspiratorial Truth achieve their goal only by sacrificing the specificity, familiarity, and immediacy of biographical narrative.

Simply put, then, human agency and conspiracy are antithetical—a fact which becomes more obvious as the conspiracy required to explain a given event becomes more abstruse. In Oswald's case, the biographical and conspiratorial narratives have become not only polarized but mutually negating. At one pole, the biographical model serves as the clasp on Pandora's box, the contours of which have, at least, a familiar face. At the other pole, we find the box riven and the narrative of Oswald's life obscured by its contents. It could perhaps be a human conspiracy, with as Richard Hofstadter notes, a "distinctly personal" enemy and "decisive events" which are "the consequences of someone's will." Or it could be a sublime—and, I dare say, postmodern—metaconspiracy, one in which the cabal is "*the motive force* in historical events" (Hofstadter 32, 29).

Some traditional notions of conspiracy *can* of course accommodate the idea of a biographical individual or finite group—Freemasons, Illuminati, Roman Catholics, Communists—which sets in motion a larger mechanism. In such a conspiracy, "the enemy is clearly delineated," as Hofstadter points out: "He makes crises, starts runs on banks" (32). Regardless of its eventual complexity or impact, then, such a conspiracy can be said to have a biographical "birth." The sublime conspiracy, however, dissolves individual volition as a viable means of understanding our world. Sometimes, "History *is* a conspiracy" (Hofstadter 29). An example of this perspective appeared in an article in the *San Francisco Oracle* of October 1967 condemning the Pentagon not merely as a "citadel

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of propaganda, corruption and mistrust," but also for being "configured in a symbol which appears in many religions and cultures as the symbol of evil" (Romm 52). A similar expansiveness informs the Tristero in *The Crying of Lot 49* and "Jes Grew" in *Mumbo Jumbo*.

The move from human to sublime conspiracy, then, parallels the move from a confident to a skeptical treatment of the subject. Like biography, human conspiracy originates in a preconception of the person as historical agent, a notion articulated clearly in Emerson's claim that "the whole of history" could "be explained from individual experience" (237). When, however, the notion of "man as the concrete universal" degenerates (Said 287), so do both the traditional conspirator and the biographical subject. Consequently, biographical narrative can no longer explain events whose human agency is not self-evident, and a particularly obscure or "ordinary" subject like Oswald only exacerbates this inadequacy. Oswald's absence as a primary source, combined with what John Clellon Holmes calls "the sobering fact that there may be almost a million people in the U.S. who are indistinguishable from Oswald, except for the crime he committed" (148), permits the creation of a diffuse range of biographical and conspiratorial Oswalds, each one inherently political. The "lone gunman" Oswald—biographically visceral and complete—is counter-subversive; but the assassination conspiracy invokes political subterfuge by, in David Davis's words, challenging "the comforting view that the American people, despite their minor differences, share a common loyalty and consensus of basic commitments and values" (xvi). And Oswald's textual career imbricates this spectrum, displaying the disintegration not simply of the biographical (and biographable) man, but even of the conspiracy plot, which disseminates from a human group into a profound conspiratorial melange. The result is an assassin who is barely human: Norman Mailer's "barely visible protagonist in a set of opposed scenarios" (197); Don DeLillo's "procedural diagram" ("American" 24); and Oswald as oxymoron—the conspiratorial man.

* * * * *

As Howard K. Smith suggested, and as the epigraphs to this essay illustrate, the media's first impulse was toward forthright

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biographical narrative, a muddy but finite job. In early 1964, a special issue of *LIFE* would crystallize the Oswald problem: "Two questions have haunted the nation and the world: what was the President's killer really like? How did he grow up to commit this terrible act?" (Jackson 68A). *LIFE*'s answer takes the form of a painstakingly linear biography with narrative peaks suggesting tag-phrases typical of the "intuitive" school of biography: "WITH BROTHERS AT 5 . . . CHUBBY AT 8 . . . THINNED OUT AT 11 . . . TALL AT 12 . . . TRUANT AT 13 . . . CLOWNING AT 15 . . . POSING AT 17 . . . MARINE AT 18 . . . HUSBAND AT 21 . . . ASSASSIN-TO-BE AT 23." Also prominent is that sense of predestination typical of biographies whose subjects are known for a single event: "He had tried military life, and failed; he was now failing in civilian life. He had tried Communism and didn't like it. He wasn't any happier living in a democracy. He had one year and one month left to live" (Jackson 75).

LIFE's strictly biographical narrative was notoriously codified later in 1964 by the Warren Commission's report on the assassination. As Richard Popkin notes, by beginning with the biographical question "why" instead of the legal question "whether," the Warren Commission was able to conclude that "though the event might have had significance in Lee Harvey Oswald's disturbed world, it had no significance in terms of the forces that control American life" (Freed & Lane 10). The Commission hearings themselves are an exercise in biographical narrativization. Their attention to the drinking, smoking, fisticuffs, darts, and pool of Oswald's childhood and adolescence is unflagging. During the questioning of an Oswald acquaintance, Assistant Council Albert Jenner remarked that "I'm trying to get a picture of this boy as he became a man" (PCH 8: 7).[1] The Commission's eventual report mirrors this interest. A full third of its 816 pages concern Oswald directly, and more than 150 pages are explicitly biographical.

The Report's structuring of this material is peculiar. Two complete, self-contained biographies appear. One, simply titled "Biography of Lee Harvey Oswald," appears as an appendix and covers some 71 pages, with 1,275 notes. Rigidly linear and painstakingly detailed, it argues for its own primacy through such particulars as Oswald's "A's in social studies, citizenship, elementary science, art, and music, and a D in spelling" (PCR 674). The other biography, "Lee Harvey Oswald: Background

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and Possible Motives," pre-hashes the same material as the appendix, but adds overt clinical analysis, a blend of sociology and physiology. In many ways, "Background and Possible Motives" seems more like "life history," which, according to Dollard, seeks "to define the growth of a person in a cultural milieu" (3). In such a history, not just biographical factors, but "the peculiar role of the family group in transmitting the culture must be recognized and even stressed" (20). Such an account represents human life as essentially reactive: the subject's reactions to culture, the body and the brain, and genetic predisposition are the topics of its discourse. Or as Dollard insists, "Life begins at zero" (26). This second Warren Commission biography, however, defines its subject not *in* his "cultural milieu," but *against* it. "Background and Possible Motives" stresses that "Oswald was profoundly alienated from the world in which he lived. His life was characterized by isolation" (PCR 376). Apparently Oswald was a specimen who had somehow developed in a state of sensory deprivation, "perpetually disconnected with the world around him" (PCR 423). If the rhetoric of the life history lends clinical authority to an otherwise political judgment—that alienation from the group results in a dangerous abnormality and disfunction—it also separates Oswald still further from the causal factors of his environment, locked within a biographical sphere segregated from the cultural foundations of conspiracy. "It has been suggested," the Commission admits, "that one of the motivating influences operating on Lee Oswald was the atmosphere in the city of Dallas, especially an atmosphere of extreme opposition to President Kennedy." Despite such suggestions, though, the Commission "found no evidence" that any general atmosphere "which may have existed in Dallas had any connection with Oswald's actions" (PCR 415). In this way, within the parameters of the life history, inquiry directed outside Oswald's personal orbit recoils back inward, allowing other factors sanctioned by life history to come into play.[2]

Perhaps to replace the Report's bifurcated structure with one coherent biography, and to remove any clinical tediousness, Commission member Gerald Ford, assisted by colleague John Stiles, produced *Portrait of the Assassin* in 1965.[3] This distillation of the Warren Commission's research on Oswald is "organized in the style of a novel." "Here—perhaps for the first time in

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history," Ford declares, "everything essential to the nonfiction novel is available," a novel that "lives and breathes with the emotions of those who suffered through the events" (vii–viii). *Portrait of the Assassin* fashions scene, dialogue, and focalized narrative from the Report's bare evidence of testimony and exhibit. Consider, for example, the events surrounding Oswald's attempted assassination of General Edwin Walker in April 1963. The Commission's appendixed "Biography of Lee Harvey Oswald" provides only this: "On Wednesday, Oswald left a note for Marina telling her what to do if he were apprehended" (PCR 724). The account in "Lee Harvey Oswald: Background and Possible Motives" is as follows:

> He had left a note for his wife telling her what to do in case he were apprehended, as well as his notebook and the pictures of himself holding the rifle. She testified that she was agitated because she had found the note in Oswald's room, where she had gone, contrary to his instructions, after she became worried about his absence. (PCR 405)

Here, however, is the scene as it appears in *Portrait of the Assassin*:

> Marina's eye raced to reread the note that sounded so crazy. There was no opening "Dear Marina" and no closing "Good-bye" or "Love" or anything else. What in heaven's name did he mean? . . . It dawned on Marina now why Lee had urged her to go back to Russia. He had hoped to get her out of the country before he committed some desperate act of this sort. . . . Oh, this hero obsession that plagued Lee. He just couldn't settle for being an ordinary, decent human being. (208)

This passage offers not only fictionalization through character-focalized narrative—"Marina's eye raced . . ."—but also ripe examples of free indirect style—"What in heaven's name did he mean?" or, "Oh, this hero obsession . . ." These and similar elements of biographical "truth," imperceptible in Marina's reported testimony or the forensic evidence of the note itself, find validity as Ford's narrator penetrates the character on the basis of the "evidence," thus assuming the narrative authority of a Flaubert or a James. Despite Ford's repeated insistence that "the witnesses wrote this biography of an assassin" (539), his conclusion is as emphatic as the Warren Commission's: Oswald's life was *too* strictly "biographical" to fit within a

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narrative of conspiracy. In Oswald's mind, Ford concludes, "to be responsible to anyone was anathema" (542).

In *Lee Harvey Oswald: A Far Mean Streak of Indepence Brought On By Negleck* (1966), Michael Hastings takes the Warren Commission's peremptory biographical narrative as expanded by Ford and puts it on the stage.[4] The play begins after Oswald's return from the USSR. Like Ford, Hastings expands upon the Commission's biographical evidence. But first he makes sure the audience knows those findings. At the curtain, a character called the "Speaker" takes the stage, and proceeds to read a straightforward, and footnoted, biography of Oswald lifted almost verbatim from the Warren Commission's "Biography." "These are the barest facts of Oswald's life with the least embellishments that can be contrived," the Speaker concludes (17), and although "These facts seem dull beside the tragic actions which followed," he piously insists that "the early years must be paraphrased—the sum of a man is in his waking" (16).

Just as Ford's "novelistic" prose fleshes out the evidence, Hastings elaborates these "dull" facts into a series of impressionistic scenes. In them, Marina and Marguerite struggle in vain to comprehend Oswald—figuratively and literally, for his social disconnection and singularity are mirrored by the halting, incomprehensible garble he speaks. A man "centered between his wife and his mother" (112), as Hastings remarks, Oswald disappears between them by virtue of his being completely unintelligible to either. Both Marina and Marguerite punctuate these scenes of domestic misunderstanding by stepping forward periodically to answer questions from the disembodied voice of the "Commission." Hastings stresses that "the passages between the Commission and the two witnesses are verbatim breakdowns of what actually took place," while "the performed scenes are the author's attempt to recreate Oswald's domestic past" (14). By having characters step forward to answer questions, Hastings splits the stage, providing a visual distinction between the public and private Oswald, between the Oswald of judicial interrogation and the Oswald of domestic *mimesis*. But the material uncovered by the "Commission" interviews is as random as the domestic scenes are unintelligible. Swallowed up by the tripartite axis of Marina, Marguerite, and the "Commission," the Oswald of Hastings' imagination is still biographical; in fact, Hastings identifies this

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disappearance as the source of Oswald's character. "Always his actions were made not from aloneness, but out of reaction," Hastings writes, "I believe it was in his makeup to respond to stimulus, from someone, to actuate himself" (108).

If this Oswald seeks to "actuate" himself, in *Oswald's Tale: An American Mystery* (1995), Norman Mailer tries to relieve Oswald of that task by taking it on himself. This most recent addition to the canon of Oswald narratives reinforces the biographical narrative established thirty years earlier. Like the Warren Commission, Ford, and Hastings, Mailer begins with the *man* rather than the *event*. Instead of trying to unravel the assassination, Mailer suggests that "perhaps it would be more felicitous to ask: What kind of man was Oswald?" (197). By searching "for the nature of the man before we decide on the plot," Mailer believes that "We could then, at least, avoid plots he did not fit" (350).[5]

The book opens in 1959 Minsk, the locus of what has been the largest blank page in the Oswald story. Its absolute freshness makes the material in this first volume, entitled "Oswald in Minsk with Marina," fascinating, even if much of it does read like a series of miniature biographies of Mailer's interviewees rather than as a sustained attempt to portray the Minsk Oswald. The result is a portrait of Oswald that is broad but not deep. A twenty-five-page biography of Marina's Aunt Valya opens the volume, to be followed by such biographical vignettes as a seven-page portrait of Stepan Vasilyevich Gregorieff, the Belarus KGB agent who "had the sort of circumscribed existence that Flaubert might have enjoyed depicting" (253). Portraying Oswald "as seen through Russian eyes" (350), through "the small revelation of separate points of view" (197), "Oswald in Minsk" becomes something of an exercise in focalization. Mailer quite literally gives each source its own unique voice, through what Thomas Powers describes as "a kind of Mailer-patent Russian-English that captures Russian rhythms not only of language but also of thinking and feeling" (32). Rimma, the Intourist Representative assigned to Oswald in Moscow, recalls that, "Of course, for her, as a person, she could certainly kiss him if she wished it that much, but, you see, she did not. Certainly not" (59). Of Pavel, an Oswald friend and reluctant KGB informant, Mailer informs us that, "Of course, not knowing that their association would be important someday, Pavel did

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not keep notes. But then, for many years after, he wanted to forget all of it, the whole goddamn thing, you understand?" (88). Rendered from without but each with its own voice, these sources create a polyphonic narrative to compensate for the surly silence of the subject himself.

Unlike many biographers, Mailer does not presuppose that the life of his biographical subject is inherently significant. Though determined "to search for the nature of the man before we decide on the plot," Mailer also acknowledges that the problematic "nature" of this obscure and somewhat pathetic outsider raises more problems than it answers:

> If such a non-entity destroyed the leader of the most powerful nation on earth, then a world of disproportion engulfs us, and we live in a universe that is absurd. . . . We have come at least to the philosophical crux of our inquiry: It would state that the sudden death of a man as large in his capabilities as John Fitzgerald Kennedy is more tolerable if we can perceive his killer as tragic rather than absurd. (198)

Here we could substitute the words "biography" for "tragedy" and "conspiracy" for "absurdity." Since Mailer has stated that "this idea that there's a huge plot and everything works like clockwork" is "impossible" (Chism), throughout his search for Oswald, Mailer must confront and struggle with the great, dull truth of his subject's absurd ordinariness. Though Oswald's invisible KGB "biographers" considered him remarkable—one claims to have thought right away that "Oswald was obviously different and special" (70), while another declares, "I've never saw another man just exactly like him" (73)—many other Minsk witnesses confirm Oswald's ordinariness. To Mailer's credit, the conflict remains unresolved. The best he can do, he admits, is to draw out the contours of the enigma, but even this heavily qualified "knowledge" is enough to augur the act of assassination:

> He has changed from a name on a page to a man who quarrels with his wife in much the manner that one can quarrel with one's own mate. He is nearer to us . . . that fellow that we got to know a little. . . . To know a man, after all, is to do no more than predict what he will do next, even if you do not have a clue as to why he does it; but to understand a person is to comprehend his reasons for action. (350, 352)

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But "understanding" and "action" are of course the crucial concerns, and they propel Mailer away from the fresh Minsk testimony and back to America, to the weathered geography of New Orleans, Fort Worth, and Dallas, and the more familiar events of Oswald's life there. Though he presents himself as a humble "literary usher," in the volume "Oswald in America" Mailer is undertaking yet another American inquiry into the assassination of JFK, and he compensates for the loss of the many Minsk voices by amplifying his own. That voice can be sarcastic. After Marguerite is fired from a clothing store because of personal hygiene, Mailer remarks that "Some spiritual disruptions may even be strong enough to assert themselves through a deodorant" (366). It can be sententious: "What is insufficiently appreciated about manhood is that it is an achievement, not a gift of gender" (369). It can even be frivolously digressive. With regard to one Mrs. J. Lee Johnson II, "one has to observe that her married name bears the first initial of J. Edgar Hoover, has Lee in the middle, and ends with the last name of the President who will succeed Jack Kennedy. (As a bonus, her maiden name is Carter)" (669). Regardless of tone, this voice is ever present. If "Oswald in Minsk" was polyphonic, "Oswald in America" is, in the words of one critic, "hyperthyroid" (Morrow 94).

The result is not only a certain exuberance, but also a new Mailerian biographical mode. He borrows the term "mystery" for a narrative that operates somewhere between fiction and nonfiction, between the novel and biography:

> Let me propose . . . that a mystery of the immense dimensions of Oswald's case will, in the writing, create a form of its own somewhere between fiction and non-fiction. Technically, this book fits into that latter category—it is most certainly not fiction. . . . Still, it is a peculiar form of non-fiction, since not only interviews, documents, newspaper accounts, intelligence files, recorded dialogues, and letters are employed, but speculations as well. The author's musings become some of the operative instruments. Of course, speculation is often an invaluable resource for the novelist. The result can be seen, therefore, as a special species of non-fiction that can be put under the rubric of *mystery*. (353)

The element of overt speculation distinguishes this new narrative form, and in true "hyperthyroid" fashion Mailer

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exercises this conjectural freedom not only in his use of language, but also in his bold asseverations. For example, notions that Oswald "had to feel feminized by his failures" or "could be sharing a *ménage-à-trois* with a Japanese man and woman" (381, 389) escalate into even more audacious claims, such as the attempt to link Oswald to the death of Marine Martin Schrand at Cubi Point, in a murder that might well have occurred during an act of fellatio (385–6). Like Gerald Ford, Mailer insists that his approach "is not legal, technical, or evidentiary but novelistic" (682). But where Ford only "novelized" material that *is* otherwise evidentiary, Mailer "novelizes" whatever material he has. His tone is almost giddy as he observes, "We have crossed over wholly into speculation" (484). And yet the Oswald emerging from this process is treated as hard evidence against the presence of conspiracy, and his willful character taken as proven:

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> Conspiracy allows him to amount to no more than a cog in a machine. That could hardly be enough for the man who has been depicted over the length of this book. If one misperceives his character on this point, then one has misunderstood him entirely. . . . Every insight we have gained of him suggests the solitary nature of his act. (778–9)

Given Mailer's stated intention to "avoid plots" that don't fit, *Oswald's Tale* thus validates its own narrative methods through a subtle form of circular reasoning. After looking *exclusively* at a life, Mailer finds that this life corroborates itself.

* * * * *

Unlike the Warren Commission, Ford, Hastings, and Mailer, some writers of Oswald narratives depart from biography per se while retaining the human clusters of a traditional, subject-driven conspiracy. The final report of the 1978 House Select Committee on Assassinations typifies this second group of texts. Whereas the Warren Commission's mulish adherence to biographical narrative led it to begin "with the man rather than the event," the HSCA "directly introduced the hypothesis of conspiracy and investigated it" (HSCAR 96), concluding that JFK was probably killed as a result of a carefully-qualified conspiracy:

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> An assassination as a consequence of a conspiracy composed solely of Oswald and a small number of persons, possibly only one, and possibly a person akin to Oswald in temperament and ideology, would not have been fundamentally different from an assassination by Oswald alone. (98)

The vacillation here between group action and individual volition creates, in the words of Leland Griffin, "a modicum of encouragement with a minimum of certainty" (112). One foot remains in biographical narrative while the other steps toward Hofstadter's "unknown Truth." It assumes that the biography of Oswald has a place—although a limited one—in a larger conspiratorial narrative.

The key here is proportion. The HSCA's biography of Oswald is a single-page chronicle focusing upon the events of 1963. And a number of popular "conspiracy" books and novels follow this lead.[6] In the world of the "spy novel," which almost by definition uses conspiracy as a primary plot device, Oswald almost (but not quite) disappears. In Donald Freed's and Mark Lane's *Executive Action* (1973), Oswald is a "decoy" who, after being used, needs no encouragement to step back into anonymity. In *Winter Kills* (1974), Richard Condon presents a mirror scenario of the assassination of JFK. President Tim Kegan has been gunned down in Philadelphia by a trio of assassins: Joe *Diamond*—counterpart to Jack *Ruby*—and a two-character Oswald aggregate composed of penitent sharpshooter Turk Fletcher, who like Oswald wishes to "pass into history" (26), and scapegoat Willie Arnold, "a little punk with a face like a kneecap, sullen and stupid" who had at one time defected to Poland (240). True to the genre, Condon eventually reveals everything to be the work of a mysterious but finite entity—"the executive committee of the men and women who own this country" (281)—and then reduces it again to a single man, Kegan's father (perhaps Condon's ultimate target is *Joseph* Kennedy).

The same combination of volition engulfed in manipulation informs the Oswald of Oliver Stone's *JFK* (1991), with its nebulous conspiracy comprised, in the sarcastic words of one critic, of "LBJ, the Joint Chiefs, the military-industrial complex, the Boston Symphony Orchestra and, possibly, David

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Letterman" (Morrow 94). So insistently does *JFK* argue against Oswald as "angry lone nut," that the moment of spiritual crisis for the film's protagonist, Jim Garrison, comes when he despairs that "maybe Oswald is what everyone says he is." As it unfolds though, *JFK* offers Oswald as a man without any significant depth—appearing in paratactic episodes, viewed by a furtive camera that seems anxious to move on to other conspiratorial elements. In fact, within the film itself, Oswald's biography is manipulated by the shadowy military body known as "Black Ops," which leaks "biographical data" about Oswald to create in the public mind that familiar biographical narrative of the "lone gunman."

* * * * *

There is, then, a significant difference between the autonomous, biographical Oswald of the Warren Commission, Ford, Hastings, and Mailer, and the ambiguous "patsy" of the HSCA, Freed and Lane, Condon, and Stone. Oswald's most intriguing and enigmatic appearances, however, come in those narratives that insinuate a sublime conspiracy as "*the motive force* in historical events" rather than as a mere human plan. In such texts, events themselves steer the narrative, rather than Oswald or even the agents of a human conspiracy.[7] In the John Weidman/Stephen Sondheim musical *Assassins!* (1991), for instance, Oswald's killing of JFK represents the catalyzing event in an assassination metanarrative. He makes "assassination" cohere and matter historically. Any personal motivation Oswald might have had for his act, however, becomes suddenly and ridiculously irrelevant, as his own biography is symbolically arrested and literally destroyed. As its title suggests, the musical features a complete roster of successful and would-be presidential assassins, including Charles Guiteau, Charles Czolgosz, Giuseppe Zangara, Samuel Byck, Sara Jane Moore, Lynette "Squeaky" Fromme, John Hinckley, and the patriarchal and histrionic spiritual leader of the bunch, John Wilkes Booth. At least within the play, without Oswald these figures make up an incomplete and marginal narrative thread that matters little to the larger fabric of history. Disjointed and random, such acts only interrupt things temporarily, their impact inevitably swallowed up into the larger flux:

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Every now and then
A madman's
Bound to come along.
Doesn't stop the story —
Story's pretty strong. (15)

These lyrics sung by a rustic "Balladeer" remind us that each individual assassination is but a discreet, meaningless, and folkloric particle. The play ceaselessly reiterates this single point, as for instance when Sara Jane Moore unloads her gun into a bucket of Kentucky Fried Chicken while a stoned Squeaky Fromme paraphrases incoherently the historical narratives of Charles Manson. What the assassins seek, then, is not just the death of the presidential hydra, whose heads are as infinite as the chain of command and as resilient as the electoral college, but a way to make their narrative cohere.

This is accomplished by Lee Harvey Oswald, whose appearance on stage late in the play is nothing short of revelatory. Since the audience has been waiting so long for his conspicuous absence to be resolved, the appearance of the lone Oswald on the "cavernous" sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository strikes like a needle on an aggravated nerve. As the scene opens, Oswald is enacting that most characteristic of biographical conventions, the death scene. As he writes to Marina in a suicide note, he has come to the School Book Depository to "end my life so that your life can begin" (91). This surprisingly selfless act at the same time confirms Oswald's selfhood by providing meaningful closure to his life. At this point, however, John Wilkes Booth enters whistling and proceeds not only to appropriate the note (which he will later burn), but to parody Oswald's life by tossing off a glib conventional biography:

> Let's see . . . (*Rattling it off like a resumé*) Born in New Orleans, October 18, 1939. Father, Robert, died before your birth. Crazy mother, Marguerite. Dropped out of school at seventeen. Joined the Marines. Court-martialed twice. Defected to the Soviet Union, October, 1959. Defected back, June, 1962. Married, Marina Nikolaevna. Two children, June and Rachel. Current employment, stock boy, Texas School Book Depository, Dallas, Texas. . . . Oh. And this morning, depressed over your estrangement from a wife who views you as a dismal and pathetic failure, your rose before dawn, kissed your

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sleeping children, put your last hundred dollars and your wedding ring into a demitasse cup which Marina's mother gave you for a wedding present, and came here to kill yourself. (92)

Booth's absurdly trivialized Oswald biography possesses even less closure than Oswald's own brief suicide note. Booth's intention, however, is not to finalize Oswald's biography, but to merge it with, and thus complete, the assassination narrative of which he himself is already a part. "*You're* the big one," Booth crows, "You're the one that's going to sum it all up and blow it all wide open" (98). It is Booth who suggests assassinating the President. At this point Oswald is, in fact, oblivious even to Kennedy's presence in Dallas. "He's coming into town to make a speech," Booth drolly informs Oswald: "His motorcade is going to go right past this window. When it does, you shoot him" (94). Oswald continues to resist the idea, even after Booth summons the other assassins to help him sell the scheme. Czolgosz, representing the "pre-Oswald Assassins," tells Oswald that "You're going to bring us back," while Hinckley, representing the "post-Oswald assassins," claims that Oswald will "make *us* possible" (96).

To Booth and his comrades, then, Oswald's act will make the assassination narrative cohere—connect its parts and give meaning to the whole. He is the seed crystal dropped into an already supersaturated solution. "Without you we're a bunch of freaks. . . . With you we're a force of history," they insist, "Bring us together, babe. . . . You think you can't connect. Connect to us" (100). Oswald of course does, and with his final, impulsive firing of the Mannlicher-Carcano out of the School Book Depository window, the other assassins withdraw to the wings. But Oswald follows them, and after a musical flourish accompanies Booth's ceremonial burning of the suicide note—thus negating the document that would have completed Oswald's own biographical narrative—we find Oswald in the chorus line singing along with the rest in the play's finale:

Free country . . .
Means the right to expect
That you'll have an effect,
That you're gonna connect—
(*Advancing, guns at their sides*)

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Connect.
Connect!
Connect! (106)

At this point the group discharges its weapons in unison, followed by a final blackout, the nine shots distilling into a single resounding blast which articulates the finalized narrative of assassination.

In *Assassins!* Oswald disappears into a narrative larger than, and antithetical to, his own biography. Three other texts provide even more expansive versions of sublime conspiracies, more akin to Tristero and Jes Grew than CIA or Mafia. In D. M. Thomas's novel *Flying In To Love* (1992), conspiracy takes on the metafictional qualities of a literary "plot." Serving as one of several allegorical elements, Oswald here has a significant amount of psychological depth, and a fairly broad portion of his life is surveyed, but he is delineated strictly according to his relationship to this "plot," becoming in essence one motif in a metafictionally conspiratorial literary whole. Thomas's Sister Beatrice writes of her city that "the raw, bleeding and chaotic violence of that moment" in Dallas "has become almost a literary 'plot,' the characters involved forming a certain aesthetic symmetry . . . a symmetry that a playwright might create, out of both inspiration and laborious craft, in the two 'couples' involved: the Kennedys, the Oswalds" (49–50). Outlining this "symmetry," Sister Beatrice notes that both the Oswalds and the Kennedys were figurative "outsiders," and both had two young children. JFK and Lee Harvey Oswald both "ruled the roost," and "all four characters were emotionally deprived" (50) and possessed dead or distant fathers. "Examining these symmetrical and *quasi*-literary patterns," Sister Beatrice concludes, "who can now imagine as we did at the time—except in rare moments—that John F. Kennedy's assassination in Dealey Plaza was avoidable? No author could have hit upon such a complex pattern on the spur of the moment" (51).

It is individual libido—manifested by physical asseveration, sexuality, and the capacity for procreation—that distinguishes Kennedy and Oswald most sharply. Thus Jack Kennedy is depicted as a libidinous rake—dominating, potent, and fertile. He even impregnates a mastectomized—that is, a symbolically

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de-feminized—woman with whom he has maintained an ongoing affair: "You're going to have another baby," he tells her, "that's an order!" (47). Kennedy is deposed by the equally virile Lyndon Johnson, who possesses "massive, swinging testicles" (142) and whom Jackie Kennedy, after consulting her *Dictionary of Symbols*, associates with a "*phallus*: 'A symbol for the perpetuation of life, of active power and of the propagation of cosmic forces'" (106). Even the moment the fatal bullet enters Kennedy's head, viewed and reviewed via the Zapruder film, is charged with sexual potency. Both David Ferrie and Sister Beatrice come to climax while envisioning "the head jerk back and explode so colourfully" (16), suggesting that assassination can be a stimulus for homosexual or masturbatory—which is to say, non-procreative—orgasm.

Oswald is Kennedy's libidinous opposite. "Alik couldn't kiss," Marina muses, "not passionately, hungrily" (118). In a Freudian maze of a waking dream, Marina views her husband "curled up very small like a snake or large worm" (71), and although their marriage is depicted as a relatively happy one, Oswald is presented as merely an exaggerated Oedipal type. A child who "couldn't really look after himself" (73), Oswald suckles on Marina's lactating breasts, calling her "mama" and ejaculating prematurely (72). When Marina joins the list of Thomas's female characters who fantasize about a sexual relationship with the President (118), Jack Kennedy even usurps Oswald's position as husband, making him a figurative cuckold. Even Oswald's own "death" is antithetical to Kennedy's. Rather than having his brain penetrated and exploded, and then symbolically replaced by an equally virile mind, Oswald's becomes unmanageable: he simply "couldn't quite control the way his brain was working" (128). And rather than passing into history as the slain father, Oswald experiences the sensation of "being in the womb again" (130). In this way, a remarkable number of biographical factors are re-configured by Thomas as Writer/Conspirator.

In Bryan Woolley's novel *November 22* (1981), Oswald disappears even more totally within a kind of violent sublimity. Woolley implies that the city of Dallas itself—or more specifically, the abstruse combination of all of Dallas's conspiratorial cells—is somehow responsible for Oswald's actions. The Warren Commission had of course denied that

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Oswald was in any way influenced by the "atmosphere of extreme opposition to President Kennedy" existing in Dallas in 1963, a climate that had led to violent attacks on Lyndon Johnson in 1960 and Adlai Stevenson in October 1963. In *November 22* this "atmosphere" is made palpable—a contorted nest of paranoia, conspiracy, and counter-conspiracy. The most striking symbol for Dallas's mindset—and the novel's central enigma—is the possibly non-existent "Bernard Weissman," the name associated with the infamous "Wanted For Treason" advertisement appearing in the *Dallas Times-Herald* on November 22, 1963. Though "even the ad manager at the paper claimed he didn't know who Bernard Weissman was" (178), this mysterious figure stands for a complex of forces as well as the single piece of information that might integrate and explain them. In *November 22*, "Bernard Weissman" is loose on the land, not only personifying Dallas's political conservatism, but also its Gestapo-like constabulary which threatens to "come out of nowhere" when cabbies run red lights (16); or its "Dallas Citizens Charter Association," whose "meetings were as secret as the College of Cardinals" (112). He is, in short, a voyeuristic force monitoring the citizens of Dallas, making them feel "like spies who would be interrogated and shot if they were discovered" (168).

Presumably Weissman also pulls the strings of Lee Harvey Oswald, who exists as the assassin of JFK in Woolley's Dallas, but always in varying degrees of proximity to the novel's fictional characters. Like Weissman, Oswald is never quite real. Of course, many watch him on TV or read about him. One character notices a shadowy figure in the window of the Texas School Book Depository. And still another is involved in Oswald's arrest at the Texas Theatre. But for this policeman, Oswald "was an ordinary-looking punk . . . just another punk kid. I've arrested hundreds like him" (229, 318). It is not therefore the single figure who pulled the trigger, but something much larger that "caused" the assassination: that vague plural that is Dallas. "They've killed a policeman!" one woman screams when the murder of J. D. Tippit is announced (215), echoing Jackie Kennedy's famous response to the suggestion that she change her blood-stained dress: "Let them see what they've done" (253). As the hours pass, even the weather joins the ever expanding conspiracy. "It's funny, ain't it?" one

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character observes, "How the weather got good just long enough for him to ride down the street and get shot, and then got bad again. It's enough to make you wonder" (259). And yet, for Woolley, moving beyond the assassination and achieving relative peace depends on the acceptance of this sublime conspiratorial truth. Closure is only available to those characters with "the will, the guts, the stupidity . . . to shout the goodness of an eternal scheme of things that can't be seen, that the evidence declares doesn't exist" (330).

Woolley's novel, then, completes a three-stage progression: from biographical narratives that argue for Oswald's complete autonomy, to those placing him tentatively into a subject-driven mechanism, and finally to full-blown conspiracy narratives that dissolve him in a sublime flux. Don DeLillo's *Libra* (1988) can be read as a fictional meditation on this very progression, as a rumination on the postmodern disappearance of Said's "man as concrete universal," taking biography along with it. This process itself, in fact, directs *Libra*'s structure. Though Oswald does exist biographically in *Libra*, we should be wary of conclusions like Constance Rooke's that "Lee Harvey Oswald is constructed as a pawn of history, yet he remains utterly personal" (134). In fact, the biographical narrative gradually destabilizes and then disappears, overcome first by the agents of a finite, human conspiracy and then by the sublime flux of a conspiracy metanarrative. Even as Oswald tips—or allows to be tipped—the Libran scales in the direction of "decision and grave event," the novel is abandoning the distinction between biographical and conspiratorial narrative in favor of an observed *coincidence*, the anathema of narrative causality.

Libra famously juggles two plots—one about Oswald and one about the conspiracy to assassinate JFK. Though they appear to be discreet—Anne Tyler called the book "herringbone-shaped" (1)—they intersect near the novel's end and, in Frank Lentricchia's words, become "fatally one" (12). Further, it is *Libra*'s bifurcated structure which disintegrates the biographical model. This becomes apparent when the book's chapters are ordered chronologically and split into two groups of twelve: a "biographical narrative," in which the conspirators are secondary figures; and a "conspiratorial narrative," in which Oswald functions as a depersonalized element.

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Biographical Narrative	Conspiracy Narrative

A: Oswald with Subjectivity Intact

[1]: "In The Bronx" [Aug. '52–Jan. '54]
[3]: "In New Orleans" [Jan.'54–Oct. '56]
[5]: "In Atsugi" [Oct. '56–Sept. '59]
[7]: "In Fort Worth" [Sept. '59]
[9]: "In Moscow" [Sept. '59–May '60]
[11]: "In Minsk" [May '60–Summer '62]
[13]: "In Fort Worth" [Fall/Winter '62]
[15]: "In Dallas" [Late Spring, '63]

[2]: "17 April"
[4]: "26 April"

B: Oswald as Element of Human Conspiracy

[17]: "In New Orleans" [Summer]
Oswald begins to interact with the conspirators: he applies for a job at Banister's office and takes rifle practice with conspirators.

[6]: "20 May"
Oswald appears at Banister's office.
[8]: "19 June"
[10]: "2 July"
[12]: "15 July"
[14]: "12 August"
[16]: "6 September"
Rifle practice with conspirators.

[19]: "In Mexico City" [Sept./Oct.]
Oswald travels to Mexico City, fails to obtain a visa and returns.

[18]: "25 September"
Conspirators discuss Oswald's trip to Mexico.
[20]: "4 October"
Conspirators monitor Oswald's return to Dallas.

C: Oswald Subsumed into Conspiracy Narrative

[21]: "In Dallas" [Late Oct.–Nov. 22]
[22]: "22 November" [Friday]
[23]: "In Dallas" [Saturday–Sunday]
[24]: "25 November" [Monday]

Chapter title, temporal frame, and the dominant agents of their action distinguish the two plots. Structurally they are arranged so as to alternate, with the biographical chapters beginning at an earlier time than the historical ones, lagging behind for awhile, and eventually "catching up" to intersect with the conspiracy near the novel's end. Given all this, it is tempting to

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follow the advice of DeLillo's David Ferrie, to "think of two parallel lines. . . . One is the life of Lee H. Oswald. One is the conspiracy to kill the President" (*Libra* 339). And yet, though there *are* two plots in *Libra* and they do converge, the above chart exposes a recondite chronological process. Starting with complete biographical autonomy (Section A), the novel gradually conflates the biographical and conspiratorial narratives, forming first a narrative of human conspiracy (Section B), then a sublime conspiracy narrative (Section C). Though occurring incrementally, this process has distinct stages, clearly marked by changes in DeLillo's methods of focalization and flagged by episodes of his trademark "Coincidence."

Since *Libra*'s very structure maps out the entire range of Oswald narrative, it will be worthwhile to review this process in some detail. As seen in the chart, Section A encompasses the life of Oswald prior to his arrival in New Orleans in the summer of 1963, and the inception of the assassination conspiracy in April of that year. At this point, though, the two plots are separate. Completely individualized, Oswald is isolated from history but desirous of entering the "stream of things"—that is, of risking his own subjectivity for meaningful participation in something larger than himself. Or as DeLillo himself has said, "Oswald was clearly an outsider, although he fought against his exclusion" (DeCurtis 288), and at least in this section, he remains, no matter how hard he fights, but "an interesting individual." Here, DeLillo's representation of Oswald scumbles the line between history and its own media. Since history comes to us on a stage or screen or page, for Oswald the goal is to be part of the "show," to be reconstructed and studied in the same manner that he views John Wayne or reads a biography of Trotsky.[8] It is Marguerite Oswald—the novel's defender of "interesting individuals"—who gives voice to many of these early biographical passages. She therefore defines conspiracy as "a whole condensed program of things that are not correct" (200), and her ongoing, internal biography of her son mirrors the tacit argument of Section A itself.

In Section B, DeLillo's narratives become symbiotic, sharing material but with each retaining its own manner of focalizing events. Though Oswald enters into a conspiracy with identifiable agents, he still follows the course of a singular "story." Encompassing the period covered by six conspiratorial chapters,

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the late chapter "In New Orleans" sustains the biographical narrative to such a degree that Frank Lentricchia claims Oswald in this chapter is a man "whose appearance *almost* turns history into designed narrative" (15; emphasis mine). From another perspective, however, we could say that the conspiracy plot outlined in those six chapters stretching from "20 May" through "6 September" embraces and then engulfs the events of "In New Orleans." In either narrative, though, Oswald is interacting more and more with the agents of the assassination conspiracy. Well before the end of Section B, the biographical plot catches up with the historical one. Chapter 16, "6 September," and Chapter 17, "In New Orleans," describe identical events. At this point chronology falls in step with textual arrangement. The rhythm of biography has been completely subsumed by that of the assassination conspiracy. No longer only parallel and symmetrical, the two plots are synchronized as well.

In Section C the narratives remain synchronized, as the chapters rapidly pick up momentum. The chronology no longer alternates, but drives through the four remaining chapters to the end. And while the chapters alternate, the previous barriers separating content and focalization crumble. The events and participants of November 22 are shared by the final "In Dallas" chapter, with no discernible difference in narrative technique or subject matter. Even more strikingly, this section—and the novel—culminates with "25 November," in which the voice of Marguerite attempts to dominate a chapter whose title places it in the conspiratorial plot line. She argues fervently for the worth and necessity of life-span biography. "I cannot state the truth of this case with simple yes and no. I have to tell a story," she insists, "I am reciting a life" (449). She constructs the story out of such biographical minutiae as Oswald's stamp collection and the babies' diapers—the sort of thing that so preoccupied the Warren Commission. But Marguerite's is a lost cause. Her argument dissolves into a welter of random facts, and in the end she even relinquishes her son's "name," no longer calling him "Lee" but "Lee Harvey Oswald," an historical trope of the biographical man comparable to "John Fitzgerald Kennedy" or "Francis Gary Powers." Biographical causality, including the genealogical link of mother to son, has been replaced by Lee Harvey Oswald as *event*, yet another random element in an impersonal, quasi-historical narrative best apprehended through

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the media. In the novel's final moment, biography, having been progressively vitiated by coincidence, passes beyond a human-driven conspiracy and dissolves into a sublime conspiratorial flux. As Lois Hughson argues in *From Biography to History*, as a narrative paradigm biography is at variance with any attempt to reconcile the individual with the flux of events. This is why history as a mode of narration has long since abandoned the biographical model. DeLillo's novel enacts this abandonment. It is hardly a stretch of the imagination to believe his claim that, as he typed the last sentence of *Libra* at his desk, the photo of Oswald that had been propped on a shelf as long as he had been writing the novel slipped and fell to the floor (Begley 293).

* * * * *

The textual career of Lee Harvey Oswald, then, displays a conflict between biography and a narrative that disavows biography's raw material: will, identity, and the incidentals of a self in the process of actuation. There may be, as DeLillo has asserted, a "deeply self-referential element in our lives that wasn't there before the assassination of JFK," but for Oswald at least this self-referentiality is shot through with a "postmodern notion of character in which the self isn't fixed" (DeCurtis 287, 289).

Oswald's ambivalent role in biography and fiction reflects his own struggle to reconcile himself to his ordinariness, to "fix" the self by force of will while keeping one eye turned toward that vast fabric of unknowable dimensions and origin. In a letter that serves as an epigraph for *Libra*, Oswald declares that "Happiness is taking part in the struggle, where there is no borderline between one's own personal world, and the world in general." But actually Oswald was never comfortable as an element in a larger mechanism, at least not one beyond his own control. He sought to tear himself from the margins of such stories, not to become a mere constituent in the process or even to escape it, but, as Leland Griffin has correctly determined, to become "the leader of a movement" (111). The so-called "Historic Diary," Oswald's most elaborate autobiographical text, can be viewed as a record of his attempt to maintain historicity and self-definition simultaneously. Begun during one of his many self-instigated "rebirths," the defection to Moscow in the winter of 1959, in it Oswald closed the door to his "own personal

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world" behind him: "I wrote my mother & brother letters in which I said, 'I do not wish to ever contact you again.' I am beginning anew life and I don't want any part of the old" (PCH 24: 5; *sic*). A few pages later, his immersion in the dialectic of history having been thwarted by the Soviet Union's refusal to offer citizenship, Oswald reclaims and finalizes his own life story through a sentimental, to-the-minute account of his unsuccessful suicide attempt in a Moscow hotel room: "somewhere, a violin plays, as I wacth my life whirl away. I think to myself, 'how easy to die' and 'a sweet death' (to violins)" (PCH 24: 30–31; *sic*). As Mailer has remarked, at such moments Oswald "was the living embodiment of *the* dialectic," continually pursuing a balance between historical inclusion and biographical singularity (560).

Of course, it is hard to deny that Oswald did enter into history, but we still argue about his primacy in the event which gained him entrance. If, as DeLillo claims, "desperate men give their solitude a purpose and a destiny" ("American" 27), then Oswald did achieve a kind of "purpose," though not through the successful actuation of his own "destiny," but rather through what Hofstadter calls an "imitation of the enemy" (32). Certainly Lee Harvey Oswald is now part of an obscure narrative which neither he nor we have resolved. He remains a shadowy figure lurking in the high window of a book depository, surrounded by texts.

NOTES

1. I will refer to the President's Commission Hearings and Exhibits as PCH, and the President's Commission Report—the "Warren Commission Report"—as PCR. The House Select Committee on Assassination Report will appear as HCSAR.
2. Oswald's rearing is of particular importance: "Significant in shaping the character of Lee Harvey Oswald was the death of his father" before the son's birth, and the influence of his mother, who "had no time for him" and who was herself isolated from her "cultural milieu" by an exaggerated egocentrism (377).
3. Ford was not the only Commission member to write a narrative reinforcing the agenda of the Report. In *Final Disclosure* (1988), David Belin, Commission Counsel, reaffirms the lone gunman theory while at the same time arguing for a cover-up of key details

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after the fact. In a chapter entitled "Why Did Oswald Kill President Kennedy?" Belin nevertheless rehashes the major details of the Commission's twin biographies of Oswald.

4. The subtitle of Hastings' play comes from Oswald's only self-contained autobiographical narrative, a brief "About the Author" sketch preceding his study of Russian life, called "The Collective." It is brief enough to quote here in its entirety:

> Lee Harvey Oswald was born in Oct 1939 in New Orleans La. the son of a Insurance Salesman whose early death left a far mean streak of indepence brought on by negleck. entering the US Marine corps at 17 this streak of independence was strenghted by exotic journeys to Japan the Philipines and the scores of odd Islands in the Pacific immianly after serving out his 3 years in the USMC he abanded his american life to seek a new life in the USSR. full of optimism and hope he stood in red square in the fall of 1959 vowing to see his chosen course through, after, however, two years and alot of growing up he decided to return to the USA. (PCH 26: 285)

Anyone familiar with Oswald's writings does not need to have his orthography explained. Many, including Mailer and a rather grudging Warren Commission, agree that Oswald was dyslexic. For a valuable discussion of this, see the Appendix to Mailer's *Oswald's Tale.*

5. In large part Mailer's book duplicates Gerald Posner's methods in *Case Closed: Lee Harvey Oswald and the Assassination of JFK* (1993), which also employs biographical self-evidence to prove a single assassin. However, unlike Posner, whom he repeatedly cites, Mailer is not bound by the conventions of objective biography. To paraphrase Leon Edel's remark that "a writer of lives is allowed the imagination of form but not of fact," as he searches for Oswald the man, Mailer allows himself to imagine form *and* fact.

6. These texts either truncate Oswald biographical material or scatter it paratactically throughout a group-driven conspiracy narrative. Most of the nearly two thousand assassination books published since 1963 fall into this category. The most commercially successful ones include Edward Epstein's *Legend: The Secret World of Lee Harvey Oswald* (1978), Anthony Summers' *Conspiracy* (1980), Blakey and Billings' *The Plot to Kill the President* (1981), Henry Hurt's *Reasonable Doubt* (1985), Groden and Livingstone's *High Treason* (1989), Mark Lane's *Plausible Denial* (1991), and John Newman's recent *Oswald and the CIA* (1995). Summers speaks for the group when he summarily dismisses his brief narrative of Oswald's life with the remark, "Somewhere along the line, Oswald

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the youthful Socialist became a tiny cog in the machinery of American intelligence" (153).

7. Needless to say, no "historical" texts offer such an explanation for the assassination, although one, Bonar Menninger's *Mortal Error* (1992), suggests that Kennedy was accidentally killed by a bullet from the gun of Secret Service agent George Hickey.

8. In John Malkovich's stage adaptation of *Libra*, a large screen at the back of the stage displays various projected images—from still-shots, to close-ups of characters on-stage, to captions that proleptically describe the suspicious deaths of various figures. At one point, the character of Mackey "passes off the screen and onto the stage," to participate in a dialogue with Elko (Malkovich 38). Still later, Branch takes up a video camera and films a conversation between Oswald and Ferrie, which is then projected onto the screen behind them (48). The play, produced by Chicago's Steppenwolf Theatre Company in 1994, is unpublished. I am grateful to John Malkovich's business associate, Russell Smith of Castlerock Entertainment, for providing me with a "working copy" of the text, on which DeLillo served as a consultant.

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Telling Bret Harte's Story: Putting Theory into Biographical Practice

Axel Nissen

When I was commencing work on my doctoral dissertation, a biography of Bret Harte (1836–1902), my supervisor told me that my most important task would be to make my subject come alive. "If you were writing about Shakespeare," he said, "you could expect people to be interested in reading your biography, but you cannot expect anyone to be interested in reading about Bret Harte. *You* have to make them interested." As the biographer of one of the deadest of the dead, white males in the American canon, I clearly had my work cut out for me.

From the onset, my aim was twofold: not only to write the first comprehensive scholarly biography of Bret Harte in sixty-five years, but also to write it in a different way from the typical scholarly biography. There were therefore two spurs to my biographical enterprise: a particular dissatisfaction with how Harte's life had been related, and a general dissatisfaction with how authors' lives are usually told. My revisioning and extending knowledge about Harte's life and literary career would therefore be combined with formal experimentation, and hopefully renewal.

In this essay I will outline how biographical, historical, and narrative theory empowered me to explore new modes of biographical discourse and organization—basically, how I put theory into practice. Let me begin with some of the basic assumptions I brought to my task. First, I felt that biographical form was not an innocent, value-neutral aspect of how biographies signified. Biographical form is not just a matter of rhetoric. The question therefore is not what form would best "clothe" some preconceived and independent notion of biographical content, but rather how were the questions I asked

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and the answers I found determined by my conception of the genre's innate possibilities and limitations. If, for example, I believed that the biographer's primary task were to give an introspective account of how a certain person felt at a given time of life, then I presumably would not be greatly concerned with hunting up sources that give me an outside view of my subject. Similarly, if showing how historical forces shape an individual's life were my primary concern, then I would spend a lot of time and energy trying to recreate my subject's economic, intellectual, and social environment. Or finally, if I were devoted to explaining the interaction between writer and work, I would direct my focus to my subject's writings. Though ideally a biographer would do all of these things, certain impulses will in practice tend to dominate.

I should also confess to the related belief, closely connected to my assumptions about form, that narrative in and of itself was a resource that biographers could put to better use. Positioned between fiction and history, biography can share the discursive methodology of both narrative history and of at least some of the novel's stylistic innovations and strategies. Some things a biography cannot or should not do—employing dialogue with no supporting primary source material, for instance—but I thought that biography should be far more open to the forms of narrative which have emerged during the last century.

I soon discovered, of course, that I was far from being the first person to hold this view. In one of his Alexander lectures at the University of Toronto in 1956, Leon Edel noted that "Biography, in its fear of fiction, has not studied sufficiently, it seems to me, the possible technical borrowings it can make from that characteristic literary form. There remains much room for trial and experiment" (152). Though forty years had passed, I still felt that much room remained. And so have others. In a thought-provoking 1988 essay, Robert Skidelsky observed that "What one chiefly notices in modern biography is how professionally it is done, not that it is experimental in style or arrangement, or that it seriously challenges accepted judgements. Nearly all biographies still start with ancestors, move on to birth, and then through birth to leading events, and so on to death, in much the same way as of old, and at about as funereal a pace" (8). The typical literary biography

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thus remains a realistic, Victorian, "loose and baggy monster," with an omniscient, intrusive, third-person narrator who guides us through a long and detailed summary of the life of one "round" character and a mass of "flat" characters. Ending inevitably with the death and funeral of the "hero" or "heroine," this slow-paced narrative buries critical turning points under a mass of lesser facts, as the frequent quotations from letters and diaries testify to biography's links to the eighteenth-century epistolary novel.

To my mind, what these biographies lacked was selectivity, interiority, and a polyphony of perspectives. This opinion is not universal, for as Dennis Petrie asks: "How is one to exorcise the feeling of both biographers and critics that style, or any part of 'design,' constitutes a 'design' against the historical, factual integrity of a literary biography?" (121). And yet, although I agree with Petrie that "fiction is not needed to make interesting the life of even the most obscure human, but 'fictional' techniques are needed" (58), the fact that my biography would be a doctoral dissertation, and thus submitted to much more vigorous scrutiny than biographies in general, made any innovation risky. By simply concluding that "both biography and fiction are *ultimately narrative*," Petrie himself did not give me the answer I needed (182). Only when I turned to a third mode of narrative writing, namely *history*, did I escape my epistemological impasse.

Since history and biography share both methodology and aims, and since biography can be historical narrative, it should not be surprising that debates in the philosophy of history will often be relevant to theorists of biography. There is no need here to give a detailed account of Hayden White's theory of the "historical text as literary artifact," other than to note his recognition of how similar patterns of storytelling govern not only fiction but also historical narrative. Further, in biography, as in all modes of historical narration, epistemology and aesthetics are intimately connected. The shape of the narrative determines not only what one can convey, but also what one can discover. "Facts do not speak for themselves in the unprocessed historical record," White notes, "and in the chronicle of events which the historian extracts from the record, the facts exist only as a congeries of contiguously related fragments" (125). Like the histories White considers,

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biographies "gain part of their explanatory effect by their success in making stories out of *mere* chronicles." *Emplotment* is the term White uses for the transaction from chronicle to history. As "the encodation of the facts contained in the chronicle as components of specific *kinds* of plot structures," emplotment in fictional and factual narrative is basically the same (83). The repertoire of available plot structures is identical; the same rules of coherence and correspondence apply. And like a history, a biography cannot become a biography unless emplotment takes place. One might even argue that biographies which only provide a chronological list of facts—and then this happened and then that happened—are not really biographies at all.

I read Hayden White's writings on historical (and hence biographical) *practice* as composing an eloquent plea for a greater awareness of the constructed, and hence "fictional" nature of all historical discourse. Once a biographer consciously thinks of narrative not as a neutral, objective form for presenting preexistent content, but in fact as part of the content itself, a number of exciting possibilities for formal experimentation present themselves. For biographical narrative as well, then, the medium can be the message.

Recognizing the links between fiction, biography, and historical narrative was one thing. Identifying different discursive strategies, and even determining how they might function in a biography, was decidedly another. Though reading fiction led me to this point, to benefit from the *what* and *how* of narrative I needed critical terms for describing techniques and their effects. I had already read widely in narrative theory, particularly the work of Gérard Genette, Boris Uspensky, and Dorrit Cohn, in addition to such popularizers as Seymour Chatman and Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan. Genette's *Narrative Discourse* was a revelation: five basic aspects of narration—*order, duration, frequency, mood,* and *voice*—shape both those unconscious parameters within which experimentation was possible and the terms I would use to describe my own biographical practice after the fact.

In biographical terms, *order* refers to the relationship between the chronology of life events and their actual discursive ordering. Taking the lead from history, in most biographies chronological and narrative order are identical. Calling it "the spine of the history and the key to causation," Barbara Tuchman

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has defended chronology on the grounds of clarity and causality. "Events do not happen in categories," Tuchman writes, "they happen in sequence. When they are arranged in sequence as strictly as possible down to month, week, and even day, cause and effect . . . will often become clear" (144).

While I agree with Tuchman that meticulously reconstructing a sequence of events is essential for the historian or the biographer, it does seem to me that having established this sequence, the biographer may then find some benefit in occasionally parting from chronology. For example, I chose to open my own biography in medias res with a chapter depicting Bret Harte's one-week visit to Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1871, the midpoint of his own life and the high point of his American fame. I did this to pique the reader's curiosity about this man who so suddenly and brilliantly burst onto the literary scene. Where had he come from? Where was he going? The same strategy recurred in individual chapters. Frequently I would break up rigid chronology, instead organizing material thematically under salient subject headings—"relationship with Mark Twain," "alcoholism," "sexuality," or "racial heritage," for example. As I adopted these strategies, I soon found that biographical discourse must waver between chronological and thematic organization. An entirely chronological biography would dissolve into a chronicle; a purely thematic one is an essay. Used occasionally, however, these thematic interludes were an effective and stylistically economical way of introducing a person or a topic at the moment when it could cast the greatest light on my subject.

Genette defines *frequency* as the number of times an event is narrated, as opposed to the number of times it actually happened. I decided to be more vigorously selective than many scholarly biographies, and especially those that prided themselves on inclusiveness. Since Lytton Strachey's "becoming brevity" seems to have disappeared from scholarly biography, I decided to be vigorously synecdochic as well. The question, therefore, became what was the best part to stand for the whole. To cite only two examples, although Bret Harte tried many times to dramatize his stories during the last twenty years of his life, I chose to concentrate on his one successful dramatic venture, the New York and London productions of *Sue* in the second half of the 1890s. Similarly, rather than discuss all the stories

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that make up his landmark *The Luck of Roaring Camp and Other Sketches* (1870), I let "Tennessee's Partner" stand for the work of Harte's major phase, when he was editor of the *Overland Monthly* (1868–70).

Genette's concept of *duration*, which in *Narrative Discourse Revisited* he calls *speed*, proved even more influential on my understanding of biographical narrative and its possibilities. Like novels, biographical narratives can make use of Genette's four narrative "speeds": *ellipsis*, *pause*, *scene*, and *summary* (34). These terms refer to the relationship between the temporal duration of a story's events, measured in minutes, hours, days, and so on, and the discursive duration of its telling, measured in words and pages. Thus an ellipsis marks the spot where some amount of time is simply elided, while a pause stops historical time, as the discourse assumes an analytic mode that is not properly narrative at all, since it lacks specific spatial and temporal configuration. Biography is more prone to pauses than the modern novel, because biographers must often interrupt the forward flow of the narrative to provide context, to suggest variant interpretations of an event, or to problematize the narrative process itself. In this the biographer resembles the historian, who as Hayden White tells us, intermittently abandons narrative for a *dissertative* mode of discourse, whose form is "that of the logical demonstration," and whose content is "the historian's own thoughts about the events" (28). Summary is biography's dominant speed. Since events that may have filled months or years are related in a sentence or a paragraph, here the "discourse" time is dramatically shorter than the "story" time. But biography may also occasionally introduce scenes, when the time of the story and the time of the narration are equal, and the narrative attempts to give a minute by minute account of an event as it occurred. Strictly speaking, of course, this is impossible, for as Genette notes in "Frontiers of Narrative," "the only thing that language can imitate perfectly is language, or, to be more precise, a discourse can imitate perfectly only a perfectly identical discourse; in short, a discourse can imitate only itself" (132). Thus, when we speak of a scene as representing past events in their temporal and spatial wholeness, we mean only that of all the narrative modes, the scene comes closest to such a representation, closest to *mimesis*.

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To my mind, one way out of the stylistic stagnation of contemporary scholarly biography was through dramatization —the representation of specific moments in the subject's life through a scenic mode of discourse. This basic approach was not new. Leon Edel had famously developed it in his biography of Henry James, and behind Edel could be discerned the novelistic principles and practices of the Master himself. Where I differed from Edel was in deciding that the best scenes to dramatize were not necessarily the most dramatic moments in the subject's life, but rather those about which I had the most sources and thus more certain knowledge. Another basic difference between his "scenic method" and mine was formal. Edel used the term loosely to denote any attempt—usually brief—at recreating a specific historical situation involving several people (5). My definition was more specific. As I constructed them, biographical scenes were situations in which the subject was alone with his or her thoughts—a form of monologue. The one exception was a scene in which I recreated an 1894 interview, based on the many direct quotes and essentially scenic character of the published interview. The usual lack of sources for dialogue makes scenes involving several people almost impossible to construct without stretching the evidence. On the other hand, the nature of our most frequently used primary sources—letters and diaries—provide ideal materials for transformation into *narrated monologue*—what Dorrit Cohn has defined as "a character's mental discourse in the guise of the narrator's discourse" (*Transparent Minds* 14). Such materials are often either quoted directly or paraphrased, but when transformed into free, indirect style and combined with information from other sources, they can form the basis of what I call a scene. Such narrated monologues allow the biographer to do three things: give a detailed account of the who, what, where, when, and how of a given situation; assume a specific perspective outside himself; and let the subject speak in his or her own words, without falling into the stylistic disharmony and incongruity of what Richard Altick has called the "mosaic method," where sources such as letters are briefly quoted in the main text (385).

To show how my scenic method works in practice, here is a portion of a scene from a chapter dealing with Harte's final years in America, from 1875 to 1878. The left-hand column is

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my text, which as the right-hand column shows, is based on an autobiographical sketch, a letter, contemporary photographs, and a visit to Harte's New York neighborhood.

Text:	Sources:
As he issued from a large townhouse on the right-hand side of Fifth Ave. between 11th and 12th street,	All the original townhouses on this block have been demolished save No. 47, which is a large four-story brownstone probably not very different from Harte's residence at No. 45. A photograph from 1865 shows that this part of Fifth Avenue was dominated by structures of this kind. (Konwenhoven 309)
Harte reflected that, as usual, the beautiful breadth of this fashion--able thoroughfare was deserted. It was six o'clock, he was an early riser, but in an area where early rising was confined exclusively to domestics, he could not help but feel that he was "desecrating its traditional customs." This reflection and other impressions from the wee hours of the city that had been his home for most of the last six years, he had just incorporated in a sketch for the *Sun* entitled "Morning on the Avenue, Notes by an Early Riser."	". . . is is my misfortune, as an early riser, to live upon a certain fashionable avenue, where the practice of early rising is confined exclusively to domestics. Consequently, when I issue forth on this broad beautiful thoroughfare at six a.m., I cannot help thinking that I am, to a certain extent, descecrating its traditional customs." ("Morning on the Avenue, Notes by an Eary Riser," *New York Sun*, 4 March 1877; Harte 1: 268)
His finances were at a low ebb again and during the last few days he had been busy working for his bread and butter.	". . . I've been writing for my bread and butter for the last few days. . . ." (Harte to Mark Twain, 1 March 1877; Mark Twain Papers, Bancroft Library)
After finishing "Morning on the Avenue," he planned on writing a similarly autobiographical piece, this time a reminiscence of a tramp he had met during his summer at Newport.	"My Friend, the Tramp" was published in the *New York Sun* on March 11, 1877. (Harte 1: 229-39)

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He often met and had a keen interest in people from the lower walks of life.

This frosty winter morning, when the ice storm of the preceding night had made the sidewalks glistening, smiling and impassable, he journeyed down the middle of Twelfth Street with a mechanic so sooty as to absolutely leave a legible track in the snowy pathway. He was a fireman attending the engine in a noted manufactory and during their brief conversation he told him many facts regarding his profession which, Harte reflected, interested him more than the after-dinner speeches of the distinguished gentlemen he had heard the preceding night. The man introduced Harte to a restaurant where chicory, thinly disguised as coffee, was served with bread at five cents a cup and honorably insisted on being the host, paying ten cents for their mutual entertainment.

It was quite a change from the morning cup of coffee he usually enjoyed in the café at the ultra-fashionable Delmonico's.

There are several examples in "Morning on the Avenue."

"I remember, however, one morning, when the ice storm of the preceding night had made the sidewalks glistening, smiling, and impassable, to have journeyed down the middle of Twelfth Street with a mechanic so sooty as to absolutely leave a legible track in the snowy pathway. He was the fireman attending the engine in a noted manufactory, and in our brief conversation he told me many facts regarding his profession which I fear interested me more than the after-dinner speeches of some distinguished gentlemen I had heard the preceding night.... I have a grateful recollection of him as being one who introduced me to a restaurant where chicory, thinly disguised as coffee, was served with bread at five cents a cup, and that he honorably insisted on being the host, and paid his ten cents for our mutual entertainment...." ("Morning on the Avenue"; Harte 1: 268–9, 271)

Harte does not mention Delmonico's by name, referring to taking his early cup of coffee "in the café of a certain fashionable restaurant that had a bar attached," but the four-story restaurant complex was just up the street from 14th St., and we know Harte frequented it along with many other literary men.

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> Uppermost in his mind on this particular morning in late February 1877 was a letter he had just received from Mark Twain. He had deliberately waited in answering it, as he had heard nothing from John T. Ford about the production of *Ah Sin*, and, more importantly, because had he written the day after hearing from Twain he doubted whether they would have had any further business together. . . .
>
> ". . . as nothing has come from Ford, I have taken my own time to talk with you. . . . Had I written the day after receiving your letter, I hardly think we would have had any further correspondence or business together" (Harte to Mark Twain, 1 March 1877; Mark Twain Papers, Bancroft Library). Harte's letter was written in response to one from Twain which has been lost, but the contents of which can be inferred from Harte's reply. From what we know of Harte's pride and nervous disposition, a letter of the kind he had received from Twain would have unsettled him greatly.

"Of the various techniques for presenting the mental life of third persons," Dorrit Cohn writes, "the one that prevails in biography is obviously psycho-narration, 'the narrator's discourse about a character's consciousness'"—and also the "most distanced of the fictional modes of [thought] presentation" ("Fictional" 9). In moving beyond this technique, which John Updike has labeled the "'must-have' school of biography" (qtd. in Cohn, "Fictional" 10), I am *not* proposing that we start fantasizing freely about "how things really were," but rather that we try to (re)construct a single moment in time on the basis of the historical evidence. While the biographer discovers or chooses the moment to dramatize, the scene itself comes to life only at the point where various sources intersect. The resulting scene is conjectural and imaginative only because the sources are not already clustered. The biographer brings them together. The example from my biography, for instance, is based on all I know of Bret Harte in general and this period of his life in particular. I imagine that such a scene took place at the time and in the manner I described, but my notes identify my sources, so the reader can evaluate my results.

Such biographical scenes supplement rather than supplant the more customary forms of summary. When attempting to provide in four hundred to five hundred pages a detailed

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account of all the important aspects of a seventy or eighty year life, summary is of course necessary and even inevitable. And in any case, while a biography consisting entirely of scenes is conceivable, it would probably be hard to follow. When scene and summary alternate, however, there can be many rhetorical gains, for summary can fill in any gaps made by the scenes—my own *Bret Harte* contains about ten scenes, making up about 8 percent of the main text.

While discussing scenic method, I have of course not only raised the question of duration, but also invoked Genette's categories of *mood* ("Who sees?") and *voice* ("Who speaks?"). Besides narrated monologue, I also borrowed from the novel what Boris Uspensky refers to as "consistent narration." "Here," he explains, "the position of the narrating observer is essentially real: the author describes the behavior of the characters in literature just as an ordinary person, in any ordinary situation, would describe the behavior of another person. In consistent narration, the author belongs to the same world as the characters and is not distinguished in any way from them" (89). For a biographer, such narration means stepping for a time into the story world—the *diegesis*—abdicating omniscience and instead taking on the role of the casual observer. Here are two examples of consistent narration. One passage of my biography begins "One bright spring morning, something quite out of the ordinary could be seen on an open country road in Calaveras County, going in the direction of the Stanislaus River and Tuttleville. It was a thoughtful-looking young man, dark-haired, with large puppy-dog eyes and an incipient moustache on his upper lip." Or here is how Chapter 5 opens: "Had we been in the vicinity of Clay Street near Portsmouth Square in San Francisco on July 1, 1870, we might have observed two striking-looking men approaching No. 619, a three-story italia-nate office building that housed the Savings and Loan Society."

In his preface to *The Portrait of a Lady*, Henry James famously wrote "The house of fiction has . . . not one window, but a million—a number of possible windows not to be reckoned.... [A]t each of them stands a figure with a pair of eyes, or at least with a field-glass, which forms, again and again, for observation an unique instrument, insuring the person making use of it an impression distinct from every other" (1075). This is true of the house of biography as well. The varied nature of any

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biographers' sources should inspire them to find new and innovative narrative strategies reflecting varying points of view on their subjects—whether that of the subjects themselves, or that of their family and friends, or even people who did not know them personally. One of my more exciting discoveries was a detailed description of what young Bret Harte looked like to another young man not personally acquainted with him. This find allowed me in two of my chapters to present Harte from a stranger's point of view. In the opening chapter, I adopted the perspective of Elinor Mead Howells, drawing on a long and interesting letter she wrote to her family just after she had met the Hartes for the first time in 1871. And finally, I ended one chapter by mimicking the epistolary novel, juxtaposing extracts from twenty letters by six different correspondents. Placed in chronological order, and with a minimum of linking commentary, they tell the story of Harte's last year in America.

Though I feel my methodology is new, the basic biographical assumptions are certainly not. After all, Boswell spoke of "an accumulation of intelligence from various points" (qtd. in Altick 61). Virginia Woolf advised "hanging up looking-glasses at odd corners" (qtd. in Clifford 133). And many have traced the birth of modern biography to Lytton Strachey's "subtler strategy" of attacking "his subject in unexpected places," thus shooting "a sudden, revealing searchlight into obscure recesses, hitherto undivined" (vii).

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Reviews

Robert Middlekauff, *Benjamin Franklin and His Enemies*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1996. 255 pp. $20.00, ISBN 0-5202-0268-6.

Relationships with friends and associates are often the most revealing materials of biography, as demonstrated in works like Robert E. Sherwood's *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, Joseph Lasch's *Eleanor and Franklin*, Harold Dean Cater's *Henry Adams and His Friends*, and Claude-Anne Lopez's *Mon Cher Papa: Benjamin Franklin and the Ladies of Paris*.

This arresting new study of Franklin, however, takes the unusual route of characterizing him by his relationships with his enemies, and the results are stunning. Middlekauff does not give us the drab, admonitory, and prudential Franklin that Mark Twain, D. H. Lawrence, William Carlos Williams, and other artists and modernists have reacted against. He does not give us the man of the world and "harmonious human multitude" painted by Carl Van Doren and most other biographers. Nor does he give us Franklin the literary artist and self-inventor who has been celebrated by recent explicators of the *Autobiography*. Instead, Middlekauff covers periods of Franklin's life which are either not covered at all in the *Autobiography* or are treated incompletely and not very clearly. He introduces people for the most part unknown to all but specialists in eighteenth-century literature and history. Middlekauff dramatizes ambitions and rivalries in Franklin's life that have been largely neglected by twentieth-century readers. And so he reveals some fascinating aspects of Franklin's character, making him at once more human and more difficult and even forbidding.

The first "enemies" of Franklin whom Middlekauff introduces are William Penn's son Thomas, who succeeded his father as proprietor of Pennsylvania, and William Smith, a talented Scot from the University of Aberdeen, whom Franklin initially liked and backed as the head of the Philadelphia Academy but who later became one of Thomas Penn's agents. Franklin's troubles with them developed as a result of the peculiar makeup of Pennsylvania government, which consisted of the proprietor on the top, a governor who was his representative in the colony, and an Assembly which represented the people, though giving disproportionate power to Quakers. Each body overestimated its own authority, and conflicts between them became especially tense during the French and Indian War. Quakers in the Assembly balked at paying taxes to support an army, and Penn

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insisted that his vast properties were exempt from taxes. Franklin at first tried to reconcile the three sides and to find supplies and equipment for an army by various other means, but when he found out that Governor Robert Morris had been telling General Braddock lies about the Assembly, and then Smith attacked it and the Quakers in print, matters got worse. Franklin defended the Assembly, Smith ridiculed Franklin, and soon the Assembly ordered Smith's arrest for libel.

It was at this point, in 1757, that the Assembly decided to send Franklin to England to try to persuade Penn to relinquish both his power to direct the governor and his privilege not to pay taxes. The mission was unrealistic, and it led to fierce altercations between Franklin and Penn. Penn repudiated the policies of his father, and Franklin described Penn as a "low Jockey" (a deceiver and trickster), and said he felt "a more cordial and thorough Contempt for him than I ever before felt for any Man living" (66). This was very harsh language for Franklin. He had lost his customary self-control, and his next move was, Middlekauff argues, downright irrational. Franklin sought to end Penn's proprietary control of Pennsylvania and have it made a royal colony. Such a change was unacceptable to Parliament and Penn's friends in the English ruling class, and it would probably have been worse for Pennsylvania than the unsatisfactory government by Penn. The fight dragged on, and Pennsylvania voters rejected the proposal.

Middlekauff's explanation of Franklin's actions was his "anger and hatred" towards Penn and his henchman. He paid dearly for his misjudgment of Smith, who had continued sending Penn malicious information about Franklin, even from jail, and this intensified Franklin's hatred of the Proprietary Party. Franklin's failure to charm Penn was an even greater disappointment, leading to frustration such as he had never felt before. Another explanation, believed by many people at the time, was that Franklin wanted Penn out of the way so he could be made royal governor himself. But Middlekauff does not push this explanation, even though acknowledging that during Franklin's stay in London from 1757 to 1762, he loved England and initially had great faith in the young King George III.

With the passage of the Stamp Act in 1765 Franklin's anglophilia began to die, till England itself became his next "enemy." His advice to its government was scorned, he found its policies towards America increasingly insolent, and in January 1774 he was disgracefully attacked and humiliated before the Privy Council by Alexander Wedderburn, the solicitor general. Thus Franklin was again made to realize what he first experienced in dealing with Thomas Penn: the deep class prejudices in England, and the upperclass resentment of American republicans who had risen through trade and their own merits. This is what made him a revolutionary.

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But his next enemies were three of his American associates in Paris. Arthur Lee of Virginia and Ralph Izard of South Carolina were of the American gentleman class and resented Franklin's French popularity. Franklin kept them in the dark about many of his dealings, they complained and bickered, and he became impatient with them. While a much greater man, John Adams gave Franklin still more irritation. Adams was critical of Franklin's methods, his French friends, and his loose behavior; and Franklin finally became so upset with him that he wrote to R. R. Livingstone that Adams "means well for his Country, is always an honest Man, often a Wise One, but sometimes and in some things, absolutely out of his Senses" (201).

The final "enemy," though Middlekauff treats him only briefly, is William Franklin, the illegitimate son whom Franklin helped to have appointed royal governor of New Jersey (or so Arthur Lee believed), but whom Franklin virtually disowned after William sided with England. After the Revolution, Franklin met him briefly in England, while on his way home from France, but their meeting was so cold that Franklin boarded ship without even saying good-bye.

"Love your enemies, for they tell you your faults." So said Poor Richard, and the maxim supplies Middlekauff with a nice folksy defense of his approach. Franklin's relationship with William Smith illustrates a serious lapse in his judgment of people. He was beguiled by Smith's smooth talk about moral education, while a much more sceptical man like John Adams saw through him. Thomas Penn brought out rage and vindictiveness that led to irrationality. Lee and Izard not only taxed his patience but revealed his difficulty in working with other men who would not follow his leadership. John Adams saw even deeper into Franklin, appreciating his brilliance but gasping at his trust of the French and his disorderliness. It was Adams who at one point organized the embassy papers, something Franklin would not do.

Yet these opponents and critics of Franklin are really most interesting because they bring out more of his character—his stronger emotions, his manners of work, and his most profound loyalties and anxieties. Were a biography to dig up only what enemies said were someone's faults, it might become just sniping and muckraking. It would also be very one-sided. Middlekauff seems to sense this and does not study just what the enemies said about Franklin, but how Franklin responded to them.

Sometimes these responses were just the ironical amusement Franklin is well known for. He took out impatience with Ralph Izard's touchy vanity, for instance, by writing "The Petition of the Letter Z," in which the letter Z, "commonly called Ezzard, Zed, or Izard," whines about always being last in the alphabet. But Thomas Penn and the English ruling class angered and goaded Franklin to much more. First

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Penn got under his skin, Middlekauff says, with the meanness and haughtiness of a ruler who felt challenged by a commoner. For Franklin to go away and call Penn a "low Jockey" was not revenge enough. Then Parliament and the Privy Council became contemptuous of Franklin and his country both, leading Franklin to see the English government as insolent, bloated, and corrupt. A year after the attack by Wedderburn, Franklin left for America, having "lost faith in almost everything English and everyone in England" (132).

Middlekauff's account of these events thus reveals how Franklin changed from anglophile to revolutionary. It emphasizes his ultimate identification with the "republicans" and "levelers," as they were called, against the aristocrats (even though once in France he again adored the aristocracy and its ladies). In so doing, it makes us ponder how unreal and ahistorical are many of the accounts of Franklin and his writing which are current today. Middlekauff's Franklin is more real because he is not just a moralizing, bourgeois Uncle Ben, or a playful and manipulative shape-shifter and self-inventor. He could be hurt and deeply offended. He could turn against an empire. He could disown his son. He could play for keeps. This book, therefore, is both a healthy restoration of Franklin, even if from an unlikely direction, and a novel development in biography, even if potentially dangerous. Enemies should not necessarily be loved for telling our faults or trusted for telling the truth. But they must be respected. As Poor Richard also said, "there is no little enemy" (134). Franklin's enemies provoked his anger, his humor, and his resolution and strength.

Robert F. Sayre

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Anne E. Goldman, *Take My Word: Autobiographical Innovations of Ethnic American Working Women*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1996. 237 pp. $40.00 cloth, ISBN 0-5202-0096-9; $16.00 paper, ISBN 0-5202-0097-7.

Building on recent scholarship in feminist theory and cultural studies, Anne Goldman uses the terminology of autobiography loosely. Like Sidonie Smith and Françoise Lionnet, Goldman assumes that the traditional definition of an autobiography as the narrative of an individual life told in the first-person singular is too narrow and ahistorical to work for the postmodern critic. This theoretically-informed critic understands the autobiographical subject as a construction shaped by his or her culture, which prescribes the terms available for self-representation and thus plays a significant role in determining the shape an autobiography will take. The narrative

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forms used by archetypal autobiographers like James Boswell and Benjamin Franklin are seen as contingent upon the authority these authors possessed as privileged members of their society. Goldman looks elsewhere for the autobiographical, reading the works of marginalized authors at odds with this authority who write life histories obliquely in the margins of a wide variety of literary genres.

Goldman's critical method then is one of discovering subtextual narratives, and this method is necessitated in part by the identities of the authors she reads. She argues that the social and economic pressures which consider display unladylike and self-reflection a luxury discourage the ethnic working women she studies from writing "straight" autobiographies. Goldman's subjects embed the potentially subversive act of self-disclosure within other narrative forms, creating authorial presences which are less visible and less threatening than the overtly exhibited "I" that the autobiographical tradition posits. The critic's project then is to discover the selves that are hidden in unexpected places, and Goldman scrutinizes her subjects' discursive strategies as she reads the lives they write into their cookbooks, edited narratives, and collective histories.

She draws these diverse texts together along the twin axes of the personal and the political, analyzing the political power of the exposition of personal experience. It is in this analysis that her work is both most productive and most problematic, as her analyses are consistently original but tend towards overstatement. At its strongest points, Goldman's book opens up her subjects' language by fusing feminist and postmodern theories to interrogate the political implications of her subjects' indirect discourse on everyday life. At its weakest, it overstates the subversive power of these primary texts, whose politics are often so ambiguously coded that they are invisible or nonexistent without the incisive blade of Goldman's secondary reading.

Goldman's persuasive analyses of cookbooks written by African-American women highlight the strengths of her critical methods. She argues that cookbooks like VertaMae Smart-Grosvenor's *Vibration Cooking: Or, The Travel Notes of a Geechee Girl* use the domestic language of food preparation as a tool for social critique, and Goldman's overarching thesis that her subjects exert political power through their writing holds up better here than it does elsewhere in the book. Quoting Amiri Baraka's "Soul Food" and pointing to Proust's madeleines, she sketches a literary lineage of food used as a metonym for memory and identity, and she illustrates the ways in which authors like Smart-Grosvenor build upon this tradition by ingeniously subverting their readers' expectations of a guided culinary tour through the exotic land of ethnicity. Goldman describes Smart-Grosvenor as an unreliable narrator who teases her white readers as she instructs them:

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> straightforward recipes for "Smothered Rabbit" and venison give way to progressively campier concoctions like "Stewed Coon" and "Peacock" (too beautiful to be eaten, in the event that a reader seriously considered the possiblity) ending with a flourish of "African" standards like "Kangaroo Tail Stew" and "Elephant Tails" and the American version of them, "Betty's Barbequed Gator Tails." (47)

The recipe titles ironically resist the Anglo-American romanticization and commodification of otherness, and Goldman adds to this list recipes for "Steak with Beautiful Black Sauce" and "Stuffed Heart Honky Style" (50). This chapter is an example of the best kind of cultural study of literature, as both Goldman's choice of texts and her analyses of them leave the reader wondering at the complexity and sustained relevance of these autobiographical ethnographies masquerading as simple how-to books.

However, Goldman weakens her rhetorical position when she exaggerates her subjects' power and becomes an apologist for their use of covert strategies that placate rather than challenge authority. In her introduction, Goldman maintains that her subjects' non-confrontational approaches do not detract from their polemical sway; she takes the position that "resistance is often most potent when it is masked, most effective when it is formulated using the language of accommodation" (xxviii). While there is undeniably some truth in this argument that one must sometimes work within the system in order to change it, Goldman adopts this view too easily, never refuting the opposing view that that you can't dismantle the master's house using his tools. Her insistence that her subjects manage to exercise agency through their writing depends so heavily upon this faith in the power of masked resistance that she sometimes fails to distinguish when the accommodating mask is more effective than the resistance it ostensibly hides.

Goldman's analysis of Jesusita Aragón's *La Partera: Story of a Midwife* is characteristic of her tendency to amplify her subjects' resistance. This analysis is part of an otherwise compelling examination of collaborative narratives in which the speakers of oral histories work to define their own identities despite the dominating frames that their editors impose. The fraught relationship between the speakers and their editors provides a useful lens, but Goldman's often dogmatic critical reading of the speakers' political arguments replicates the act of forceful imposition that Goldman critiques in the edited texts. Her gloss contorts her quotation of a dialogue in which Aragón, a midwife in New Mexico, submits to her boss's abusive policies:

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> what looks like acceptance of the boss's demands for overtime—"When my boss asks me to stay two or three hours after work, overtime, I never say no"—actually defines her as indispensible. "I can't send you home because I like your work; you do everything I tell you," her supervisor acknowledges. (104)

Goldman prefaces this quotation by explaining that "this discursive strategy of apparent acquiesence" is in fact Aragón "at her most argumentative," but here as in other places, she fails to explain convincingly how this is anything other than the submission that it seems to be.

Despite this propensity for coercive reading, Goldman's analysis is generally intelligent and persuasive. Her focus on her subjects' labor cogently historicizes their self-representations. As Goldman explains, "in part, what enables such autobiographers simultaneously to represent culture and to write the self is their insistence on the work involved in both activities" (xxvii). This synthesis, and the insights that follow from it, are valuable contributions to the body of interdisciplinary scholarship that works at the intersection of feminist theory, cultural studies, and autobiography.

Gloria Fisk

Robert S. Grumet, ed. *Northeastern Indian Lives, 1632–1816.* Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1996. 393 pp. $55.00 cloth, ISBN 1-5584-9000-0; $18.95 paper, ISBN 1-5584-9001-9.

This volume brings together fifteen examples of lives from what Mary Louise Pratt has previously called "the contact zone"—a place of conquest and conflict, but also a place in which the frontier can become fluid, in which roles are often improvised, and in which power relations can be dramatically more complex than they at first seem. The particular contact zone at issue in *Northeastern Indian Lives* encompasses the colonial frontiers of the present-day northeastern United States. Ranging from Maine to Ohio, the lives documented in this book represent an important geographical and cultural diversity among the indigenous peoples of the Northeast, while providing an impressive historical sweep, from the Pequot War of 1637 to the early national period following the Revolutionary War.

Reading merely the first four contributions (which are arranged in chronological order) reveals just how illuminating the volume can be. These four chapters portray four important figures, each from a different tribal group affected by the series of events surrounding the

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Pequot War. Paul A. Robinson describes the life of Miantonomi, the Naragansett sachem who decided to side with the English in the infamous 1637 attack at Mystic, Connecticut. Eric S. Johnson writes about Uncas, the Mohegan who arranged Miantonomi's assassination and attempted to fill the power vacuum resulting from the Pequots' defeat. Wyandanch, John A. Strong tells us, was a Montauk "alliance chief" who became embroiled in these conflicts despite the distance that the Long Island Sound afforded him. And Robin Cassacinamon, the Mashantucket Pequot whose life Kevin A. McBride documents, led one of the two Pequot communities that managed to maintain its independence and identity after the devastating conflict. While each of these essays stands on its own as an insightful account of an individual life, together they present something more like a modernist history, a fragmented account that, while not elucidating every point of view possible, provides enough variety of perspective to impart to the reader a sense of how complex these colonial encounters were.

Given the subjects of *Northeastern Indian Lives*, however, terms such as "perspective" and "point-of-view" must be qualified. With a paucity of historical evidence, these biographical sketches are at best speculative, particularly in regard to the emotional lives of their subjects. Fortunately, the contributors to *Northeastern Indian Lives* are careful enough scholars to mark the boundaries of their own knowledge—to tell the reader where the historical deduction ends and the more adventurous guesswork begins. Harold E. L. Prins, who writes about the Abenaki leader Rawandagon, is one of the most astute commentators on this problem:

> In contrast to that of European individuals, very little is known about Abenaki personhood on the colonial frontier. Few surviving manuscripts reveal anything more than the mere surface of seventeenth-century Abenaki life. And even then, all that we can extract meaningfully are shreds of information—a name, a reference, an act, a fact—only vaguely hinting at what was a very complex cultural universe. (95)

Here is the dilemma facing these biographer-historians. How does one present the lives of indigenous subjects as vividly and compellingly as possible while relying upon the hints, whispers, and shadow meanings of the literate observers who so often profoundly misunderstood those same people?

Instead of bewailing their methodological conundrum, these authors take a pragmatic, ethnohistorical approach that interprets written, colonial documents through the lens of informed ethnographic information. As a result, these accounts almost always shuttle back and forth between their individual subjects and the tribal cultures

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to which they belonged. At its best, this method creates a kind of documentary dialectic. We use the cultural information to learn more about the individual, and draw on what we know about the individual to speculate further about the culture, which then allows us to interpret the individual life still further, and so on.

Such an approach need not oversimplify the relationship between the individual and his or her culture. In her chapter on the life of the Saconet "Squaw Sachem" Awashunkes, Ann Marie Plane writes:

> In recognizing the complexity of her [Awashunkes'] life, we can begin to suggest how culture is located not in some distant "social structure," but in the individual, who after all both creates and copes with exterior forces. Each actor holds within himself or herself several different identities, and chooses from a range of possible behaviors associated with each. In this view, each individual, rather than typifying the whole, represents simply a slice of his or her culture. (156, citations omitted)

Plane's fine contribution, like many others in *Northeastern Indian Lives*, makes the reader aware that this ethnohistorical biography represents a kind of disciplinary "contact zone" of its own, one that combines a tactical shrewdness while fostering an awareness of the necessary methodological shortcomings. By the end of the volume, the reader has not only observed several slices of Native American cultures in the colonial era, but also come to appreciate how many more "slices" are still missing. A quick overview of the contents of the volume suggests just how significant such absences from the historical record may be. Because ethnohistorians must rely upon written, usually European, documents, the vast majority of the subjects in *Northeastern Indian Lives* were involved in the political arena, either as community leaders recognized by the Europeans or as diplomats who served as go-betweens. Though one cannot fault the contributors or the editor for such an emphasis, those necessarily absent deserve more attention than Robert S. Grumet's Introduction gives them.

Such an objection is small when compared to the results that this pragmatic methodology yields. Grumet himself describes the life of Suscaneman, a Matinecock Indian from Long Island whose name appears on more than ninety deeds spread over a fifty year period. By relating these deeds to histories of the area, Grumet not only reconstructs Suscaneman's life, but also outlines a deliberate land-sale strategy of carefully managed delay, thus contradicting the still widely held belief that Northeastern American Indian groups like the Matinecocks sold their land easily and as quickly as the European settlers dared to ask.

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Prins' account of Rawandagon offers another example of methodological innovation. An Abenaki leader in the central coastal area of what is now Maine, Rawandagon was widely known among the English as "Robin Hood." After investigating how the English characterized Robin Hood in the popular ballads of the time, Prins argues that "Rawandagon did not earn his peculiar sobriquet because the English associated him with their own heroic outlaw of tradition, the noble bandit of medieval Sherwood Forest, who stole from the rich and gave to the poor. On the contrary the English made a mockery of this Abenaki sagamore and his fellow hunters of the Maine woods" by comparing him to a bawdy bandit who consorted with rustic buffoons (105). By using this interpretation of Rawandagon's nickname to illuminate the Abenaki leader's interaction with the English, Prins delivers one of the most compelling interpretations in the volume.

Like much recent scholarship in Native American studies, *Northeastern Indian Lives* points to the work that still remains. For instance, the book reveals how much we still do not know about the role of gender in the cultures of the Northeast Native Americans and in European-Native relations. The three biographical sketches of women in the volume—Anne Marie Plane's description of the life of the Saconet "Squaw Sachem" Awashunkes, Lois M. Feister's and Bonnie Pulis's account of the politically important Mohawk Molly Brant, and Bunny McBride's and Harold E. L. Prins's biography of the Pigwacket doctor Molly Ockett—are all rich in detail and provocative in their conclusions. Each acknowledges, though, that this research only begins a line of inquiry that should surely continue. Such moments show why *Northeastern Indian Lives* is such a valuable volume. Its accomplishments should prove to be important and lasting, and its authors convincingly demonstrate how much exciting work awaits us in the years to come.

Michael A. Elliott

Donald J. Raleigh, ed. A. A. Iskenderov, comp. *The Emperors and Empresses of Russia: Rediscovering the Romanovs*. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1996. 414 pp. $63.95 cloth, ISBN 1-5632-4759-3; $25.95 paper, ISBN 1-5632-4760-7.

This book consists of a series of biographical essays first published in the Russian journal *Problems of History* in the years 1989–1993 and then, with one exception, in translation in the journal *Russian Studies in History*. Thus the book is a presentation of Russian biographical

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writing for a general reading public that reflects the reassessment of pre-Soviet history which has taken place since Gorbachev instituted his policy of *glasnost*. Altogether there are eleven essays on individual Romanov monarchs, starting with Peter the Great in the late 17th century and ending with Nicholas II, who abdicated in 1917. Only three minor figures, who ruled briefly, are not treated separately. The book also has a "Preface" by Donald J. Raleigh in which he explains the origin of this series of portraits and the justification for selecting the essays from a single journal: "*Voprosy istorii* (Problems of History)—[is] an important barometer of change for the Russian historical profession" (ix). He also isolates several themes that the essays have in common, though each one is written by a different scholar. This "Preface" is followed by an "Introduction" by Akhmed Iskenderov, the editor-in-chief of *Problems of History*. He sets out the essays in the context of "official Soviet historiography" and emphasizes each essayist's attempt to present a complex and impartial portrait of an individual ruler. This introductory matter is then followed by a "Genealogical Table" delineating the Romanov family line from the late 17th century to 1917. Raleigh provides each essay with a brief introduction, summarizing the author's approach to his or her subject and highlighting the most important issues with which the author deals. After the essays, there is a two-page list of "Suggestions for Further Reading" of books and journal articles in English and an index.

On the whole the essays succeed in the aims set out by Iskenderov. They are generally an artful combination of the interaction between an individual leader's personality and historical conditions—traditions, problems, and constraints. The emphasis is on political biography: how an individual ruler interacted with historical givens to fashion state power. The biographical information we are given is generally restricted to those aspects of the monarchs' upbringing and early experience that would have a bearing on their governing style and decisionmaking: relations with close family members and other figures of early influence, education, and the circumstances in which they came to the throne. Often this information is conveyed in the monarchs' own words or through those of contemporaries, lending the essays an intimacy and immediacy that is one of the pleasures in reading them. The reigns of each monarch are presented chronologically, usually with an analysis of both domestic and foreign policies. The authors are careful to point out the impact of the individual monarch's personality on a policy and the limits even to autocratic power. The essays often take issue with a "received" image of individual rulers. Thus Empress Elizabeth is presented by Viktor Naumov as a more sympathetic, independent, and active figure than has usually been the case, whereas Larisa Zakharova's Alexander II,

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the tsar who liberated the serfs and was assassinated in 1881, is depicted as less of a "progressive" reformer than is usual in Russian and Soviet history.

Written for a general Russian reading public rather than for specialists, these essays do not go into great detail on any one issue. Still, one expects a certain level of scholarship from authors who are either instructors at leading Russian universities or members of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Generally the scholarly level is high and the writing accessible, though the essays vary in quality. The advantage that Russian scholars have is access to archives and an enormous array of older materials, particularly periodicals. Some scholars made much more use of such materials than others. In his essay on Peter the Great, for example, Vodarskii makes no use of archival sources, Peter's own words, or the memoirs of eyewitnesses, depending instead on a rather small number of books by Russian historians. On occasion, his essay also contains questionable statements from his sources which are quoted without comment. The essays on the 18th century empresses omit any discussion of gender issues and sometimes echo debatable notions of the "masculine" and "feminine." For example, though Alexander Kamenskii's essay on Catherine the Great is balanced and sympathetic, and contains extensive quotations from her own memoirs, it still draws on a small range of sources and betrays an acceptance of dubious gender categorizations and an obtuseness about the issue of female rule. On the gender issue, for instance, Kamenskii states: "Powerful, willful women of strong character who think clearly are often said to have a masculine mind. There is no doubt that Catherine did possess that kind of 'masculine mind,' but she nonetheless remained a woman, with all the traits characteristic of the 'weaker sex'" (152). As for sources, Kamenskii makes only one reference to archival materials, quotes only occasionally from contemporary memoirs, and cites only Pushkin among the many Russian writers who penned literary works about Catherine. In contrast, the essay by Larisa Zakharova on Alexander II, which Raleigh rightly calls "one of the most penetrating, thoughtful, and subtle accounts of the tsars to appear in *Voprosy istorii*" (294), brims over with original materials from several archives, diaries, letters, and Western sources in three languages, all integrated into a lively and multifaceted biographical essay.

Emperors and Empresses of Russia has been well translated and well edited. The essays, which run in length from about thirty to forty-five pages, can be enjoyed by a nonspecialist audience. No doubt some prior acquaintance with Russian history would help: all the authors assume that readers know its basic outlines. Sometimes the particulars debated in the reassessments of Russian history will be of little interest to the nonspecialist. And there are times when it would have been

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helpful to include more explanatory footnotes for the nonspecialist, clarifying, for example, the difference between "state peasants" and "serfs," or what "military settlements" were. Finally it is to be regretted that these eminent Russian historians have not generally engaged in more of a dialogue with their Western counterparts. On the whole, though, the essays are models of the brief political biography, and the curious reader who becomes engaged by the account of a particular figure or period can then turn to one of the longer treatments listed in the "Suggestions for Further Readings."

Charlotte Rosenthal

Linda Wagner-Martin. *"Favored Strangers": Gertrude Stein and Her Family*. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1995. 346 pp. $34.95, ISBN 0-8135-2169-6.

Brenda Wineapple. *Sister Brother: Gertrude and Leo Stein*. New York: Putnam's, 1996. 514 pp. $35.00, ISBN 0-3991-4103-0.

In an interview in 1946, Gertrude Stein explained that the popularity of biographies in the twentieth century "is due in part to this enormous publicity business. The Duchess of Windsor was a more real person to the public and while the divorce was going on was a more actual person than anyone could create" (22). Stein, in Brenda Wineapple's words "one of the most well-known literary personages people hadn't read" (398), knew only too well that the "publicity business" created larger-than-life images that the American public readily accepted, and any Stein biographer must wrestle with the mythic personality that has grown up around her—that of the expatriate aesthete, the "Mother Goose of Montparnesse," who spouted cryptic aphorisms. Stein's own autobiography, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, even in its title demonstrates her rejection of a coherent, unified self narrating a neat chronological story of a life. Thus, the difficulty of writing a biography of Stein lies in fixing the identity of a figure whose life's work resists the idea of a unified subjectivity.

Rather than mold Stein's life into a traditional biographical model, in *"Favored Strangers": Gertrude Stein and Her Family*, Linda Wagner-Martin writes a biography that is necessarily different, she explains, because it records a woman's life. As a "women's biographer," Wagner-Martin has learned that "the conventions of traditional biography do not work for most women subjects. These conventions—that the subject has led an exemplary life, that this life is best treated chronologically and pegged on historical events external to the subject,

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that the subject's internal life is not intrinsically significant—may work for many men's lives, but women's lives strain against their implied narrative" ("Notes" 267–8). "*Favored Strangers*" focuses on Stein's "personal success story," which Wagner-Martin argues has been eclipsed by "the story of the idiosyncratic art collector and writer who ruled the expatriates in Paris with her immense personal power" (xii). This "success story" can only be told, Wagner-Martin explains, in terms of the development of Stein's "internal life," and by understanding Stein within the context of her family.

The result of Wagner-Martin's commitment to writing the story of a "woman's life," with special attention to Stein's childhood, adolescence, and internal world, is a biography which brings into focus a larger and richer portrait of Stein, one which deals with issues previous biographers have rarely broached. Wagner-Martin perhaps breaks the newest ground in her book with her consistent attention to four topics: Stein's early family life, her status as a member of an immigrant family, the importance she placed on her Jewish identity, and her fluid identity.

Stein's early childhood is described here as the "ingenious survival" (2) of the Stein children in the midst of a thoroughly dysfunctional family. Their father, Daniel Stein, was a "tyrant," whose "rigid and often unreasonable demands" left their mark on his wife Milly, "a classic enabler," and on his children well into their adult lives. Wagner-Martin's discussion of Stein within the context of her early family life helps to explain why Stein, in an uncharacteristic disclosure, described her adolescence in Oakland, California as "dark and dreadful days." Stein struggled simultaneously, "*Favored Strangers*" explains, with puberty and the death of her mother from cancer. The relationships between members of the Stein family may have been unhealthy at a deeper level as well, Wagner-Martin suggests in her insightful reading of Stein's early notebooks, where careful attention to Stein's words broaches a thoroughly taboo subject: possible sexual abuse. Wagner-Martin cites Stein's references to her "experiences with Uncle Sol," "scene like the kind I had with Uncle Sol," "like me what he tried to do" (25). Aware of the weight of her claims, Wagner-Martin is careful to qualify her conclusions as only speculative, but even her speculations raise issues central to many women's lives, issues too often silenced.

In her Preface, Wagner-Martin introduces the Stein family as "successful first-generation Austrian Jewish emigrants to their promised land, America" (xiii). For Wagner-Martin, Gertrude Stein's identity is profoundly shaped by her experience as a second generation immigrant, and by her father's often desperate pursuit of the American Dream. Within this context, her brother Leo's move to study art in Italy in 1900 defied Daniel Stein's vision of leading his family to success

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in America, although the Stein siblings' success in Paris is, finally, an "American kind of success: financial, aesthetic, and artistic" (271). Wagner-Martin's focus on Stein's family also enriches the picture of her life as an expatriate writer and art collector. Stein's early life in Paris was a family affair in which her brother Mike and his wife Sarah held Saturday evening salons at their apartment, and her brother Leo not only collected art with Gertrude but was an accomplished art critic and painter. Wagner-Martin also fills out our picture of Stein's life in Paris by focusing on what many other biographies have failed to take up: her "satisfied, happy life as the lesbian partner of Alice B. Toklas" (xii) and her many friendships with women.

While Daniel Stein's self-image as the "quintessential American pioneer" (7) certainly shaped the future aspirations of the Stein children, equally important was the way in which the family upheld long-standing Jewish traditions. Wagner-Martin deftly explores how Stein's Jewish identity affected both her personal and professional life, paying careful attention, for instance, to the impact of her status as a Jewish daughter: "knowing well the comparative powerlessness of girls in the Jewish family, Milly balanced the traditional emphasis on male rites of passage and male education with attention to Bertha and Gertrude" (9). Wagner-Martin makes it clear that Stein, "intensely self- and race-conscious," identified herself as a "Jew" (49). Her experience of both anti-Semitism and sexism at Johns Hopkins University, we are told, contributed to her failure to complete her course work there.

Although *"Favored Strangers"* emphasizes Stein's identity as a member of an Austrian-Jewish immigrant family, Wagner-Martin also shows how Stein's self-presentation was often marked by performativity or self-invention. Stein's dismissal of the importance of her mother—"she died away and left them and they all soon forgot that she had ever been important to them"—was a "fantasy" that allowed Stein "to 'forget' the immense personal pain she felt" (21). According to Wagner-Martin, Stein also used apathy at Johns Hopkins to disguise "the anger she felt at the sexism and racism evident during her years at medical school," as well as her "sexual frustration" (50, 55). Wagner-Martin explains that Stein repeatedly re-invented herself, posing in the 1920s, for instance, as the "great, undiscovered American writer" (162). Taking up an issue routinely discussed by literary critics but not by biographers, *"Favored Strangers"* also discusses Stein's fluid sexual identity as an integral part of her "success story."

There is a danger, however, in Wagner-Martin's convincing portrait: she overuses her focus on Stein's ability to "pretend" to be something she was not. Wagner-Martin asks an important question about Stein's allegiances during World War II, but provides no answer. "what was Stein's identity now, in December 1944—the conservative

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art patroness protected by collector Bernard Fay, or the Jewish American who had helped the resistance, or an old Frenchwoman moving back to Paris?" (258). By this rhetorical question, Wagner-Martin implies that, when necessary, Stein took on all these roles, regardless of their political implications. However, highlighting the adopted nature of Stein's identities during World War II elides the perhaps unsettling fact of Stein's own conservative politics. "*Favored Strangers*" avoids this question altogether by reading Stein's work during the war—*Wars I Have Seen* and an "Introduction" to the collected speeches of the Vichy leader Pétain—as pieces that "fit into Stein's oeuvre as autobiography, not as political treatise" (261). As a result, Wagner-Martin sidesteps the contradiction between Stein's conservative politics and her radical literary experimentation, and thus misses a vital opportunity to do what she does so successfully in other chapters. For example, we learn earlier in the biography that Stein's departure from medical school stemmed not from her "boredom," but from her newly politicized sense of the discrimination and sexism at Johns Hopkins. However, Wagner-Martin in turn departs from her own insights about the politics behind Stein's personal decisions. It is only when Stein's politics are significantly more conservative that they become, in Wagner-Martin's words, "autobiographical"—personal, not political.

In *Sister Brother* Brenda Wineapple, like Wagner-Martin, contends that in order to understand Gertrude Stein, we must examine her life within the context of her family. Wineapple, however, focuses on a specific dynamic within the Stein family—the intimate, powerful, and eventually failed relationship between Gertrude and her brother Leo. In mapping the development and impact of this relationship, *Sister Brother* is structured around the break between them in 1914, a break about which Gertrude Stein, and hence her biographers, have been all but silent. With her venture into this new territory, Wineapple demonstrates the central role the relationship between Gertrude and Leo played in their personal lives, creative work, and aesthetic theories.

While "*Favored Strangers*" works to undermine Stein's image as an egotistical aesthete, Wineapple offers a new portrait of the relationship between brother and sister that has heretofore been depicted only in terms of what they said of one another in the wake of their painful separation. In the scenario that Wineapple seeks to complicate, Leo is an egotistical bore who silenced Gertrude with his patronizing criticism of her work and her intellect. It would follow that Gertrude could only come into her own as a writer after she was out from under his thumb. The comments they passed between mutual friends about each other are famous and acerbic—for instance, Leo's "she's basically stupid and I'm basically intelligent" (363). *Sister Brother*

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shows how Leo's criticism made Gertrude feel "miserable" and betrayed, much as her increasingly intimate relationships with both Alice Toklas and Pablo Picasso, and the siblings' diverging views on art and literature, made Leo feel alienated and rejected.

However, the main focus of *Sister Brother* is not the break between Gertrude and Leo but the profound, shaping impact their relationship had before, during, and after their split. In the usual account, an aimless Gertrude follows Leo first to Harvard and then to Paris, but Wineapple emphasizes that Leo was as devoted to Gertrude as she was to him. Wineapple's focus, however, is the consistent influence Leo had on Gertrude's aesthetic theories and writing. No longer the failed older brother of the more famous Gertrude Stein, Leo emerges from *Sister Brother* as a man of significant learning and expertise, the art expert in the Stein family who educated his sister about modern art. Wineapple reveals the very specific and direct ways Leo affected Gertrude's writing: hanging the Cézannes he had recently bought above her desk; suggesting that she translate Flaubert's *Trois Contes* when she was at an impasse in her work (the impetus, she would later write, for *Three Lives*); repeatedly voicing his theories about visual metaphor, which Stein would echo in her own writing; and, with his development of the correlation between the physical and aesthetic, boldly anticipating Gertrude's project in *Tender Buttons*. Wineapple concludes that even Stein's reflections on her own "genius" stemmed from Leo's early contention that "effective genius requires courage and egotism" (175).

Sister Brother thus provides a new window on Gertrude Stein, and an entirely new context within which to read much of her work, from her early experiments as a psychologist, to the texts she produced as a modernist writer. For example, Wineapple traces Stein's concept of "dueling types" of human personalities, developed early on in the psychology laboratory at Harvard, to her relationship with Leo: "One need look no further than Stein's sense of herself with respect to Leo: she and her brother were complementary and competing, the same yet different" (107). Wineapple also suggests answers to a question few biographers have taken up: why it took Stein nearly ten years to finish *The Making of Americans*. While many have acknow-ledged the time Stein spent writing her "great American novel," Wineapple details the family relationships and complex shifts in her theories of subjectivity that delayed and shaped this project.

Wineapple also uses Gertrude's relationship with Leo to elucidate some of Stein's most experimental texts, demonstrating that her innovation actually reflected her grounding in the "reality" of the here and now. For example, the varied rhythms of Stein's poem "Two" (1910–12) record in an abstract way the cadences of Leo and their brother Michael's wife Sarah, but also speak to Gertrude's increasing

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sense of isolation from them (351). Wineapple argues convincingly that when Stein writes in *Tender Buttons*, "for instance before when there was a separation there was waiting, now when there is separation there is the division between intending and departing," she is reflecting on Leo's move out of the Rue de Fleurus and her sense of impending loss (379). *Sister Brother* also offers a new perspective on Stein's increased drive in 1913 and 1914 for publication and a reading public. While many scholars have used Stein's productivity in the immediate wake of Leo's departure as proof that Leo had long repressed Gertrude's creativity, Wineapple offers a more subtle picture of this transformation. Gertrude did not come into her own as a result of Leo's departure, but rather sought affirmation and praise from a reading public in the face of what was an open rejection of her, known to all their friends on both sides of the Atlantic. Although, as Wagner-Martin's book makes clear, reading Gertrude Stein's texts autobiographically is not new, *Sister Brother*'s emphasis on her relationship with Leo is, and this new prism is valuable not so much for what we learn about Gertrude, but for the insights it allows into the intersections *between* Stein's innovative aesthetics and her familial relationships.

However, *Sister Brother* is also greatly concerned with the cultural and historical context in which the Steins wrote and lived. By exhaustive research into personal letters, historical events, and the intellectual communities Gertrude and Leo belonged to, Wineapple not only details the theories of the many cultural players in the fields of psychology, medicine, Judaism, and women's rights, but also relates Gertrude's and Leo's ideas on these topics to the prevailing ideas of the time, dismantling the portrait of a monumental, stubborn Gertrude Stein pronouncing unalterable convictions. For example, Wineapple's discovery of Stein's article "Degeneration in American Women" (c. 1901) helps us to see how her ideas about the roles of women, gender, motherhood, and education changed over time and with her experience in medical school, revealing how the roles that Stein prescribed for women had as much to do with her cultural environment as with her own struggles with gender identity. Gertrude's dilemmas were those of the "quintessential modern woman" as well as her own. "She already prided herself on her modernity, which, in 1894, meant that she would be educated, trained, even unfettered—at least in intellectual terms. But the modern woman," Wineapple tells us, "did not yet know how to integrate the demands of the flesh and the spirit" (71).

Wineapple's research is perhaps most helpful, however, in her discussion of Judaism and the period's prevailing anti-Semitism, which both Gertrude and Leo experienced at Harvard and Hopkins. But at the same time, Wineapple explains, they rejected the mores of

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their mother's family and the elite Jewish community of Baltimore. The "modern Judaism" Stein developed as early as her college papers at Radcliffe was one way for her to rationalize her feeling of "otherness." However, *Sister Brother* demonstrates that Stein's faith, like her systematic typing of personalities, did little or nothing to dispute the prevailing stereotypes of Jews as wealthy, intellectual, and clannish. Wineapple thus offers a closer examination of the Jewish identity Wagner-Martin sees Stein embracing so fully.

By placing Leo and Gertrude within a larger social and historical context, showing how their internal worlds were invariably shaped by their external world, *Sister Brother* succeeds in painting a complex picture of these often contradictory siblings. Gertrude was "exceptional and middle-class; unique but normal; singular not solitary; she also straddled two worlds" (173). And this picture of a person both in step and in conflict with the "modern age" also holds true for Leo: "in an era that demanded hard work, concrete achievement, and aggressive self-assertion of its men, Leo was curiously indolent" (102).

Although Wineapple remains consistently aware of the dangers of reading with the benefit of hindsight, *Sister Brother* falters in one significant way. In an effort to demonstrate that Leo Stein was not the failed, egotistical older brother who limited Gertrude's creative efforts, but was rather an "unpretentious, unusual man" (278) who was too demure to put his ideas to paper for decades, Wineapple downplays the role Gertrude played in the genesis of her own work. Wineapple explores the intricacies of Gertrude's complex theories about psychology, art, and identity, yet she seems to maintain that even Stein's most original, experimental work, which in many ways revolutionized modernist writing, was sparked or anticipated by Leo, leaving unanswered the more interesting question of *how* Stein developed such an original style, often so completely divorced from her brother's ideas about life and art, in the midst of a relationship that so consumed her. Moreover, it would be equally important to hear how Gertrude influenced Leo's work, particularly his most successful book *Appreciation*, a text that seems to support Stein's projects in her most experimental writing—which ironically Leo called "abominable." As Wineapple describes them, Leo's conclusions in *Appreciation* directly reflect those set out by Gertrude in *Tender Buttons*, that "art was part of culture, part of society, it was a democracy to be found everywhere, in all our vital interests, in food, in the landscape, in the remote and unexpected" (405).

"*Favored Strangers*" and *Sister Brother* do important and needed recuperative work in Stein biography, demonstrating that Gertrude

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Stein is not an impenetrable aberration or isolated aesthete, but a writer whose work was necessarily influenced by both her family and by the culture which circumscribed her.

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Wagner-Martin, Linda. "Notes from a Women's Biographer." *Narrative* 1.3 (Oct. 1993): 265–73.

Phoebe Stein

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REVIEWED ELSEWHERE

All publication information listed is derived from the journals monitored. Ideally each entry includes the title of the work, the author, the place and date of publication, the publisher, the number of pages, and the price; sometimes, however, this information is not available in the journal or differs from that of the publisher. This issue contains reviews from *American Studies, Annals of the Association of American Geographers, Bulletin Critique du Livre Français, French Review, Journal of Asian Studies, Los Angeles Times Book Review (LATBR), Le Monde des Livres, New York Times Book Review (NYTBR), The New Yorker, Revue d'histoire litteraire de la France, Romance Quarterly, Science, Sight and Sound, Signs, The Smithsonian, Studies in the Novel, Times Literary Supplement (TLS), Washington Post National Weekly Edition (WP),* and the *Women's Review of Books.*

Alexander the Great

The Genius of Alexander the Great. N. G. L. Hammond. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1997. 220 pp. $29.95.

" . . . short, clearly written book, the distillation of a life's work."

Bernard Knox, *LATBR* Mar. 9, 1997: 3.

Arafat, Yasser

Le Foudre et la Paix. Janet and John Wallach. Trans. (from English) Sylvette Gleize. Paris: Bayard, 1996. 474 pp. F160.

Les Sept View d'Arafat. Christophe Boltanski and Jihan El-Tahri. Paris: Grasset, 1996. 400 pp. F139.

There is certainly a mystery about Arafat, the everlasting rebel, the terrorist who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, the endless loser who was never really vanquished. These two books often differ in their conclusions, whether they speak of his origins, or of the factors which nearly put paid to the agreements with Rabin, or when they say why he left his wife behind when going to Washington—divergences tending to prove that the Arafat mystery is far from cleared up.

Daniel Vernet, *Le Monde des Livres* Jan. 17, 1997: 9.

Arnold, Matthew

A Life of Matthew Arnold. Nicholas Murray. New York: Thomas Dunne/St. Martin's, 1996. 400 pp. $27.95.

Murray "does certainly give us the finest picture yet of Arnold as a playful and poised ironist, against-the-grain social critic, mocker of

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the knowing and the smug. Even more important, he gives us Arnold as a quick-fingered unraveler of deep-worn cultural patterns, as deft as any of today's politicized deconstructionists—and much funnier."

James R. Kinkaid, *NYTBR* Mar. 16, 1997: 14–15.

ARRHENIUS, SVANTE

Arrhenius: From Ionic Theory to the Greenhouse Effect. Elizabeth Crawford. Uppsala Studies in the History of Science 23. Nantucket, MA: Science History Publications/USA (Watson), 1996. 320 pp. $49.95.

"... this fine biography, the first in English, is a rewarding account both of the man and the various causes to which he devoted his formidable talents. ... We have here, then, a book that accomplishes the difficult task of combining a lucid treatment of scientific ideas and a sensitive reconstruction of their historical circumstances."

John W. Servos, *Science* 273 No. 5281 (Sept. 13, 1996): 1512–14.

Atwater, Lee

Bad Boy: The Life and Politics of Lee Atwater. John Brady. Reading, MA: Addison Wesley, 1996. 330 pp. $24.00.

"... Brady, a professor at the University of Missouri School of Journalism, has done an adequate job of reconstructing his brief and fevered life. Atwater's final battle against cancer is a lesson in courage, and it is recounted with often intimate and touching recollections."

Frank Mankiewicz, *LATBR* Jan. 19, 1997: 4.

"'Bad Boy' ends up a very simple tale about the limits of political power."

Robin Toner, *NYTBR* Feb. 16, 1997: 20.

BABEL, ISAAC

At His Side: The Last Years of Isaac Babel. A. N. Pirozhkova. South Royalton, VT: Steerforth, 1996. 171 pp. $22.00.

"Babel would have enjoyed Ms. Pirozhkova's book, concise and full of bright incident. He would have also appreciated her ability to see past herself, though she is always a presence in the narrative and is forced to the center of the story when she joins the millions of Soviet women seeking to learn if their men are dead, or when they died, or even just how. ... Her account of Babel's arrest and disappearance is so moving because she first makes Babel so fantastically alive, a dervish of curiosity."

Richard Lourie, *NYTBR* Dec. 22, 1996: 6.

"Elegantly translated by Anne Frydman and Robert L. Busch, 'At His Side' celebrates the living Babel, his marvelous sense of humor, his

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generosity, his enjoyment of everyday life, his painstaking writing habits. It also confirms his reckless disregard of the mortal dangers that threatened him and all other Russians in those years."

Olga Andreyev Carlisle, *WP* Feb. 24, 1997: 33–4.

BANACH, STEFAN

The Life of Stefan Banach: Through a Reporter's Eyes. Roman Kaluza. Trans. (from the 1992 Polish edition) Ann Konstant and Wojbor Woyczynski. Cambridge, MA: Birkhäuser, 1996. 137 pp. $29.50.

"Stefan Banach (1892–1945), a founder of functional analysis, was a member of the illustrious group of mathematicians who met at the so-called Scottish Cafe in Lvov, Poland, in the 1930s."

Katherine Livingston, *Science* 274, No. 5288 (Nov. 1, 1996): 734.

BARDOT, BRIGITTE

Waiting for Bardot. Andy Martin. London: Faber and Faber, 1996. 183 pp. £9.99.

"Andy Martin's book is part autobiography, part hagiography. . . . Often funny and endearing . . . it is, however, not well written enough to survive on those terms alone and has little of real interest to say on Bardot's place in French culture, the history of cinema or the sexual fantasies of the over-40s."

Sight and Sound 7.2 (Feb. 1997): 34.

BARNES, DJUNA

Djuna: The Life and Works of Djuna Barnes. Phillip Herring. New York: Viking, 1995. 386 pp. $29.95.

"Herring's biography comes close to an ideal modernist biography in its aim of rendering Barnes not as a single or fixed identity but as a polyvalent and heteroglossic 'text' or montage of 'texts.' . . . The apparatuses Herring includes . . . anticipate that this biography will be used as much as read, with a design pointedly addressing scholarly needs."

Margot Norris, *Studies in the Novel* 28.4 (Winter 1996): 582–9.

BARTOLI, CECILIA

Cecilia Bartoli, The Passion of Song. Kim Chernin with Renate Stendhal. New York: HarperCollins, 1997. 232 pp. $25.00.

"The book is in two parts: Ms. Chernin's patchwork mosaic of interviews and reportage and Ms. Stendhal's more linear effort, a 10-year performance record of Bartoli's career. Much of Ms. Chernin's section I must call gush, incorporating dutifully transcribed puffery from handlers with commercial agendas. . . . Most of the book I would call a heartfelt stab at wondering if her subject is this or if she's that."

James McCourt, *NYTBR* Mar. 16, 1997: 16.

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BECKETT, SAMUEL

Damned to Fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett. James Knowlson. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997. 800 pp. $35.00.

"... maturity of tone ... crisp and unobtrusive writing ... model of biographical excellence."

Ralph Sipper, *LATBR* Dec. 15, 1996: 14.

BELL, GERTRUDE

Desert Queen: The Extraordinary Life of Gertrude Bell. Janet Wallach. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1996. 419 pp. £20.

"It is a shame that in her straightforward, cogent description of a forceful, appealing and deeply sad woman there is no room for psychological speculation or analysis."

Nicola Walker, *TLS* Jan. 31, 1997: 28.

BERRIGAN, DANIEL AND PHILIP

Disarmed and Dangerous: The Radical Lives and Times of Daniel and Philip Berrigan. Murray Polner and Jim O'Grady. New York: Basic Books, 1997. 434 pp. $30.00.

"... the Berrigans ... can take satisfaction in seeing that the generals and admirals who once commanded the nuclear strike forces are now themselves advocating the total destruction of nuclear weapons."

Nicholas von Hoffman, *LATBR* Feb. 9, 1997: 5.

"Murray Polner and Jim O'Grady, journalists who focus on American social history, have attempted here an ambitious joint biography of the two priests against the background of their times. That the book is not altogether successful does not detract from its solid virtues: the conscientious research into many aspects of the Berrigan's lives, the assiduous interviewing of their colleagues in resistance and a finely etched portrait of their bleak youths in the Mesabi Iron Range of Minnesota."

J. Anthony Lukas, *NYTBR* Feb. 9, 1997: 16.

BETTELHEIM, BRUNO

The Creation of Dr. B: A Biography of Bruno Bettelheim. Richard Pollak. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997. 448 pp. $27.50.

"Pollak's book does not convict only Bettelheim, it indicts those of his time who knew the man but kept their reservations to themselves."

Howard Gardner, *LATBR* Jan. 19, 1997: 3.

"What if the great Dr. Bettelheim, the champion of emotionally disturbed children and the author of 'The Uses of Enchantment,' 'Freud and Man's Soul,' and 'The Empty Fortress,' was in fact a bitter, sadistic, anti-Semitic, mother-hating liar?

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That is the hypothesis Mr. Pollak follows in 'The Creation of Dr. B.' Although Bettelheim declined to be interviewed for the book, Mr. Pollak interviewed two of Bettelheim's three children, his first wife and a slew of colleagues, editors, students, and friends. And many of them agreed that, in the words of Jacquelyn Seevak Sanders, Bettelheim's successor at the Othogenic School, 'You couldn't believe anything he said.' The trouble with the book is that Mr. Pollak seems to think he must dig up malice and lies at every turn."

Sarah Boxer, *NYTBR* Jan. 26, 1997: 14–15.

AND *Bettelheim: A Life and Legacy*. Nina Sutton. New York: Basic Books, 1996. 606 pp. $35.00.

" . . . there is no way a reader can avoid the impression that Pollack is committed to putting the worst possible face on Bettelheim at every juncture. He recounts every deception, minor as well as major, in an exhaustive welter of details. . . . The result is a carping and distorted account in which Pollak strikes an accusatory tone even when it is not called for, and races past poignant moments or warm recollections for fear of being deflected from his mission. . . .

Nina Sutton's more judiciously balanced—and more convincing—account zooms in on that small, embattled figure of Bruno Bettelheim from the opposite angle. She began as an ardent admirer, uncovered many of the same discomfiting facts as Pollak, and ends with a tempered respect for a person beset by demons yet capable of rising above them to help others overcome traumatic experiences."

Daphne Merkin, *The New Yorker* Mar. 24, 1997: 76–82.

CARRERAS, JOSÉ. See DOMINGO, PLÁCIDO.

CARTER, JIMMY

Jimmy Carter: A Comprehensive Biography from Plains to Post Presidency. Peter G. Bourne. New York: Lisa Drew/Scribner's, 1997. 553 pp. $32.00.

"This is an author who has waited a long time to get Jimmy Carter on the couch in public. And while Dr. Bourne's divided function affects the voice and structure of the book (one can't really be a good friend, a good shrink and a good biographer, too), the details come from close observation, Dr. Bourne's own fresh interviews . . . and generous use of the oral histories available in the Carter Presidential Center Library; much of the book has the feeling of fruit straight off the tree."

Dudley Clendinen, *NYTBR* Mar. 16, 1997: 24–5.

CASTLEREAGH, VISCOUNT

Castlereagh, 1769–1833, ou Le Défi A L'Europe De Napoléon. Antoine d'Arjuzon. Paris: Tallandier, 1996. 492 pp. F150.

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"A French perspective on Viscount Castlereagh is welcome, especially when it is as well written and engaging as this one. Antoine d'Arjuzon brings enthusiasm and sympathy to his study of the man he believes did more than Nelson or Wellington to ensure the defeat of Napoleon."

John Derry, *TLS* Jan. 17, 1997: 12.

CHAMBERS, WHITTAKER

Whittaker Chambers: A Biography. Sam Tanenhaus. New York: Random House, 1997. 639 pp. $35.00.

"Sam Tanenhaus, a freelance journalist, has done a careful and exhaustive job of research. His approach to his protagonist is sympathetic but not hagiographic, and his prose is clear, trenchant and well paced. His book will not please all readers, but even remaining defenders of Alger Hiss must acknowledge it, I believe, as a serious and absorbing work."

Arthur Schlesinger Jr, *NYTBR* Mar. 9, 1997: 5.

CHATEAUBRIANT, ALPHONSE DE. See ROMAIN, ROLLAND.

COX, KENYON

Kenyon Cox, 1856–1919: A Life in American Art. H. Wayne Morgan. Kent, OH: Kent State UP, 1994. 304 pp. $32.00.

"Although Morgan insists that his work is a biography and not art criticism, he often describes the paintings at length. . . . Since so little of the basic archival research on this period has been done, this biography and its companion works are a very important foundation."

Bailey Van Hook, *American Studies* 37.2 (Fall 1996): 204–5.

CRANMER, THOMAS

Thomas Cranmer: A Life. Diarmid MacCulloch. New Haven: Yale UP, 1996. 692 pp. $35.00.

"This lucidly written, deeply researched and surprisingly accessible biography of the man who served Henry VIII as Archbishop of Canterbury, by Diarmid MacCulloch, who teaches church history at Oxford, ably explores both Cranmer's drive and his persistent doubts."

Allen D. Boyer, *NYTBR* Dec. 15, 1996: 24.

DIOR, CHRISTIAN

Christian Dior: The Man Who Made the World Look New. Marie-France Pochna. New York: Arcade, 1996. 314 pp. $25.95.

"The author of biographies of Gianni Agnelli and Nina Ricci, Ms. Pochna brings to her subject a reporter's doggedness and a mechanic's knack for assembling a whole from dozens of parts. The wisdom she has to offer is mostly received, including the notion that the New

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Look found its inspiration in Dior's memories of his mother and the clothes she wore when he was a child during the *belle époque*."

Holly Brubach, *NYTBR* Jan. 12, 1997: 14–15.

DOMINGO, PLÁCIDO, LUCIANO PAVAROTTI, AND JOSÉ CARRERAS

The Private Lives of the Three Tenors: Behind the Scenes with Plácido Domingo, Luciano Pavarotti, and José Carreras. Marcia Lewis. Secaucus, NJ: Birch Lane/Carol, 1996. $21.95.

"Marcia Lewis, a reporter for *The Hollywood Reporter*, displays both insight and a weakness for melodrama in 'The Private Lives of the Three Tenors.' She documents the ascent of Plácido Domingo, Luciano Pavarotti and José Carreras from modest roots to international stardom and knowledgeably explores what has driven these artists to such great heights."

Michele Lutz, *NYTBR* Dec. 29, 1996: 15.

EISENHOWER, MAMIE

Mrs. Ike: Memories and Reflections of Mamie Eisenhower. Susan Eisenhower. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1996. 320 pp. $26.00.

"In 'Mrs. Ike,' Susan Eisenhower has written a vivid memoir incorporating hundreds of unpublished letters between her grandparents during the war and accounts of life with Ike by family and friends. In this telling of her life, Mamie comes across as full of spice and self-confidence. . . . 'Mrs. Ike' helps liberate Mamie Eisenhower's image both from the shadow her husband cast and from the shadings of history."

Mark Marvel, *NYTBR* Jan. 5, 1997: 19.

ELLROY, JEAN AND JAMES

My Dark Places. James Ellroy. New York: Knopf, 1996. 351 pp. $25.00.

". . . in a remarkable 'L.A. Crime Memoir,' the author transforms himself into a modern-day Jack Webb who retraces the fruitless investigation, the course of his mother's doomed life, and his own weird journey to reclaim her memory and find her killer."

The New Yorker Jan. 20, 1997: 97.

FERGUSON, SARAH—DUCHESS OF YORK

Fergie: The Very Private Life of the Duchess of York. Madame Vasso. New York: Pinnacle/Kensington, 1996. 305 pp. $5.99.

Fergie: Her Secret Life. Allan Starkie. New York: Marlowe/Michael O'Mara, 1996. 224 pp. $22.95.

"Readers interested in learning more details about Sarah Ferguson's spectacular rebirth as a self-iconizing entrepreneuse are advised to

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skim Madame Vasso's slim volume but to study diligently Mr. Starkie's copiously detailed tome."

Joe Queenan, *NYTBR* Jan. 5, 1997: 13–14.

FONSSAGRIVES, LISA

Lisa Fonssagrives: Three Decades of Classic Fashion Photography. David Seidner and Martin Harrison. New York: Vendome, 1996. 149 pp. $75.00.

"... with an essay by the art historian Martin Harrison, the photographer David Seidner has assembled more than 100 images of her by 21 photographers. The pleasure of the collection, aside from its appeal to the fashion-afflicted, is the quality and variety of the photographic vision."

Rosemary Ranck, *NYTBR* Feb. 9, 1997: 21.

FRANKFURTER, FELIX. See HOLMES, OLIVER WENDELL.

FREUD, SIGMUND

Back to Freud's Texts: Making Silent Documents Speak. Ilse Grubrich-Simitis. New Haven: Yale UP, 1996. 322 pp. $35.00.

"This study of Freud's actual texts, first published in German in 1993 and ably translated by Philip Slotkin, is at once both vigorously technical and of broad interest. Ms. Grubrich-Simitis is a highly regarded and widely published psychoanalyst in Frankfurt; earlier, she worked for years at S. Fischer Verlag, Freud's postwar publisher in Germany, and served as editor of various editions and collections of Freud's writings. Her study is an important contribution to the growing understanding of Freud as a mind and as a writer."

Steven Marcus, *NYTBR* Feb. 16, 1997: 13–14.

GHELDERODE, MICHEL DE

Correspondance du Michel de Ghelderode. Vol. 4. *1936–1941.* Ed. Roland Beyen. Archives du Futur. Editions Labor et Archives et Musee de la Litterature. Brussels, 1996. 714 pp.

A rigorously compiled edition, containing excellent notes and a preface which summarizes the content of the letters.

Jacqueline Blancart-Cassou,
Revue d'histoire litteraire de la France 96.5 (1996): 1053–5.

GIAP, VO NGUYEN

Victory at Any Cost: The Genius of Viet Nam's Gen. Vo Nguyen Giap. Cecil B. Currey. Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, 1997. 401 pp. $25.95.

"Mr. Currey, who previously wrote 'Self-Destruction: The Disintegration and Decay of the United States Army During the Viet

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Nam Era,' has written an assiduously researched and engrossing biography."

Chris Patsilelis, *NYTBR* Feb. 2, 1997: 20.

GLADSTONE, WILLIAM

Gladstone: A Biography. Roy Jenkins. New York: Random House, 1997. 698 pp. $35.00.

"All in all, the book is a very decent try at an immensely difficult subject, encompassing an enormous amount of material. Lord Jenkins goes through the sources with commendable zeal. He also writes well, which is remarkable, given that he has spent all of his professional life combing through Euro-committee prose, a real killer to style. His great strength, which makes the biography worth having, is that he can convey the dreams of speeches in the House of Commons—theatrical events that recur even now, witness the last days of Margaret Thatcher there."

Norman Stone, *NYTBR* Feb. 23, 1997: 7–8.

"Jenkins' 'Gladstone' is a symphony conducted a half-note off key. The 'quintessential statesman' of Victoria's reign was more than just that. In the cantankerous vigor of his sanctimony and self-righteousness, Gladstone was the quintessential Victorian."

Stanley Weintraub, *WP* Feb. 12, 1997: 32–3.

AND *The Two Mr. Gladstones.* Travis L. Crosby. New Haven: Yale UP, 1997. $35.00.

"Jenkins, himself an accomplished politician (Home Secretary in two Labor governments, a founder of the Social Democratic Party, onetime president of the European Commission), has written an exhaustive, permanent biography, whose greatest virtue is its extraordinary worldliness. Jenkins has a bred-in-the-bones sense, almost unique among political biographers, of politics as improvisation, game and even theatre. . . .

Crosby offers a psychobiography, full of 'stressors' and 'coping mechanisms' (i.e. problems and solutions). He has a lot to say, all of it interesting, about how a man as passionate, and even unstable, as Gladstone managed to stay a big cheese in public life for more than sixty years. Yet one comes away persuaded by the implicit case Jenkins makes first, that, for all Gladstone's psychological complexity, his greatest political gifts were, like Ronald Reagan's, largely physical—charismatic and oratorical."

Adam Gopnik, *The New Yorker* Feb. 10, 1997: 78–82.

GURDJIEFF, GEORGE IVANOVICH

Gurdjieff: Essays on the Man and His Teaching. Jacob Needleman and George Baker. New York: Continuum, 1996. 450 pp. $34.50.

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"Despite hectic episodes of fame and notoriety Gurdjieff seemed destined for historical oblivion but this ambitious Festschrift of 43 items . . . confirms that Gurdjieff is here to stay."

James Moore, *TLS* Feb. 14, 1997: 31.

HARPER, FRANCES E. W.

Discarded Legacy: Politics and Poetics in the Life of Frances E. W. Harper, 1825–1911. Melba Joyce Boyd. Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1994. 252 pp. $39.95.

"While *Discarded Legacy* presents a broad selection of excerpts from Harper's letters, lectures, and essays to contextualize her poetry and prose, Boyd's resistance to theoretical paradigms undermines her ability to address her purpose. As a result, this study tends to regard Harper's literary activism as transparent social criticism."

Claudia Tate, *Signs* 22.2 (Winter 1997): 462–5.

HARRIMAN, PAMELA CHURCHILL

Reflected Glory: The Life of Pamela Churchill Harriman. Sally Bedell Smith. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996. 559 pp. $30.00.

"When Christopher Ogden's 'Life of the Party' came out in 1994, one wondered if anything remained to be said about the amazing career of Pamela Digby Churchill Hayward Harriman. But there was much to say, and Sally Bedell Smith has said it in this marvelous book about the chubby English debutante who, through an epic saga of brilliant self-invention, transformed herself into the U.S. ambassador to France.

Unlike Ogden, who initially had Harriman's cooperation for his book, Smith never interviewed her subject. This might have been an insuperable handicap, except that our lady in Paris has acquired along the way so many talkative enemies—encompassing not surprisingly, a large number of vindictive women—that Smith has managed to come up with a wealth of delicious, new material."

Charlotte Hays, *WP* Nov. 18-24, 1996: 35.

HEMINGWAY, ERNEST

The Only Thing That Counts: The Ernest Hemingway/Maxwell Perkins Correspondence. Ed. Matthew J. Bruccoli and Robert W. Trogdon. New York: Scribner's, 1996. 367 pp. $35.00.

" . . . while this correspondence is about writing that lasts, it does not stand as notable writing itself . . . a lesson in just how much labor Hemingway had to devote to writing when it was meant for the public."

John Balzar, *LATBR* Jan. 19, 1997: 9.

"'The Only Thing That Counts' collects 238 of the letters the two men wrote to each other from their first exchange in 1925 until Perkins'

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death in June 1947. Hemingway's letters are spoken, emotional and contradictory, his expressions of dedication to writing sometimes overshadowed by his suspicion that Scribner's was not paying him enough or advertising his books well. Perkins's letters are businesslike and far less personal, but his affection for Hemingway is unmistakable."

Keith Dixon, *NYTBR* Dec. 15, 1996: 24.

HEPBURN, AUDREY

Audrey Hepburn. Barry Paris. New York: Putnam, 1996. 496 pp. $35.00.

"Talented, kind, generous, beautiful—it's hard to find anything bad to say about Audrey Hepburn, and by the end of Barry Paris's thoroughgoing biography, you are ready to take up arms against anyone who might dare."

Andrea Higbie, *NYTBR* Dec. 15, 1996: 24.

HOFFMAN, ABBIE

For the Hell of It: The Life and Times of Abbie Hoffman. Jonah Raskin. Berkeley: U of California P, 1997. 315 pp. $24.95.

" . . . biography in the wrong hands personalizes history too much, reduces it to the experience of the book's subject and omits larger meaning."

Nicholas von Hoffman, *LATBR* Feb. 9, 1997: 5.

". . . the thicket of information about Hoffman's life and milieu more than compensates for what the book lacks in analytical ambitions. In the process, Mr. Raskin provides not just a finely detailed story about an engaging, if flawed, character but the valuable materials for a larger lesson."

Jonathan Rieder, *NYTBR* Feb. 2, 1997: 14.

"'Sad' rather than 'tragic' seems the most appropriate epitaph for Hoffman, but Raskin insists on the latter. Himself a child of the 1960s and a veteran of the skirmishes, Raskin understandably but misguidedly leans toward assigning his subject more import than the facts can sustain."

Jonathan Yardley, *WP* Feb. 12, 1997: 33.

HOLMES, OLIVER WENDELL

Holmes and Frankfurter: Their Correspondence, 1912–1934. Ed. Robert M. Mennel and Christine L. Compston. Hanover, NH: U of New Hampshire P/UP of New England, 1996. 302 pp. $45.00.

"One soon discovers . . . that the collection is one-sided: not only are there only half as many letters from Frankfurter to Holmes . . . but Frankfurter's letters are shorter and most contain little more than fulsome praise of Holmes. . . . The editors . . . are to be commended

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for their informative introduction and their useful annotation of the references in the letters to people, books and cases that the passage of time has made obscure."

Richard A. Posner, *NYTBR* Dec. 15, 1996: 16–17.

HOROWITZ, DAVID

Radical Son: A Generational Odyssey. David Horowitz. New York: Free Press, 1997. 464 pp. $27.50.

"Page after page of this book is given over to settling old scores, attacking the writings of erstwhile buddies and generally presenting himself as a dislikable person. . . . "

Nicholas von Hoffman, *LATBR* Feb. 9, 1997: 5.

HOUDINI, HARRY

HOUDINI!!! The Career of Ehrich Weiss. Kenneth Silverman. New York: HarperCollins, 1996. 465 pp. $35.00.

". . . a virtually all-new biography. Instead of retelling the standard Houdini anecdotes, Mr. Silverman examines the evidence with a fresh eye and a sleuthlike determination not to be snowed by Houdini's notorious 'improvements' of the facts. Best of all, he is able to place Houdini in the context of his own times—and ours."

Teller, *NYTBR* Dec. 15, 1996: 14.

IBSEN, HENRIK

Henrik Ibsen: A New Biography. Robert Ferguson. London: Richard Cohen, 1996. 466 pp. £35.

"He tells the outwardly uneventful story of, at any rate, the first half of Ibsen's life, very readably. It is the second half of Ferguson's book that I find difficult to admire, for there is little sense of the wider theatrical and literary scene. There is much implausible speculation."

Michael Meyer, *TLS* Jan. 17, 1997: 11–12.

ISHERWOOD, CHRISTOPHER

Diaries. Vol. 1. *1939-1960.* Ed. Katherine Bucknell. New York: Michael de Capua/HarperCollins, 1996. 1048 pp. $40.00.

"This is an enormous volume, although only the first of two. It has been superbly edited by Katherine Bucknell, with helpful footnotes, a detailed chronology of Isherwood's life and an invaluable glossary identifying the cast of characters and explaining key terms from the Vedanta. My one complaint has to be about the length. The diaries appear uncut, Isherwood's legatee, Don Bachardy, not having allowed them to be reduced. This was to set loyalty above publishing sense, given how many flat and repetitive entries the volume inevitably contains."

John Sturrock, *NYTBR* Jan. 5, 1997: 6.

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JACKSON, THOMAS "STONEWALL"

Stonewall Jackson: The Man, the Soldier, the Legend. James I. Robertson, Jr. New York: MacMillan, 1996. 950 pp. $40.00.

"Mr. Robertson, the Alumni Distinguished Professor of History at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, tells us that he has been nourishing this mighty book for seven years. Before that he had produced a history of the Stonewall Brigade, Jackson's first command, and a biography of Jackson's fellow general A. P. Hill. In the process, he appears to have investigated every nook and cranny of Confederate history and every scrap of evidence relating to the general who at the peak of his fame, he writes, 'was arguably the most famous field commander in the world.' The result, 'Stonewall Jackson: The Man, the Soldier, the Legend,' gives us far and away the sharpest picture we have ever had of this enigmatic figure."

Stephen W. Sears, *NYTBR* Mar. 16, 1997: 23.

JAMES, HENRY

Carnet de famille, suivi de Les années de maturité. Henry James. Trans. Christine Raguet-Bouvard. Paris: editions Rivages, 1996. 444 pp. F149.

French readers will at last have access to the final two parts of James's autobiography. They will recognize the Jamesian universe (creatures of anguish, united by bonds of secrecy and fate), his main theme (the old world vs. the new), and especially his extremely dense, asphyxiating prose that never stops or breathes, and never avoids parentheses, interpolated clauses, parallel, or peripheral developments—a more pragmatic and voluntarist version of Proust's style.

Patrick Kéchichian, *Le Monde des Livres* 29 Nov. 1996: 3.

JOFFREY, ROBERT

The Joffrey Ballet: Robert Joffrey and the Making of an American Dance Company. Sasha Anawalt. New York: Scribner's, 1996. 464 pp. $35.00.

"In 'The Joffrey Ballet'—a book remarkable for its warmth and vigor, and for its blending of candor and judiciousness—Sasha Anawalt, a Los Angeles-based dance writer, analyzes Joffrey's artistic achievements and personal complexities."

Jack Anderson, *NYTBR* Feb. 9, 1997: 9.

JOHNS, JASPER

Jasper Johns: Privileged Information. Jill Johnson. New York: Thomas and Hudson, 1996. 335 pp. $27.50.

"Whether or not you agree with Ms. Johnson's more *outré* suppositions, you have to acknowledge her intensive research and

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her relentless scrutiny of Mr. Johns' works. She is very good at analyzing Mr. Johns' contemporaries and his relationships with them."

Grace Glueck, *NYTBR* Feb. 9, 1997: 28.

JUNGER, ERNST

Ernst Junger and Germany: Into the Abyss, 1914–45. Thomas Nevin. London: Constable, 1997. 284 pp. £30.

"... it would have been instructive to learn more about the man and his life than we do from Thomas Nevin, who is above all a literary critic. Nevin has little sense of history and of the context of a German life in the past 100 years."

Ralf Dahrendorf, *TLS* Feb. 28, 1997: 3–4.

LAWRENCE, D. H.

D. H. Lawrence: Triumph to Exile, 1912–1922. Mark Kinkead-Weekes. New York: Cambridge UP, 1996. 943 pp. $39.95.

"'The Cambridge Biography: D.H. Lawrence, 1885–1930' made its debut in 1991 with John Worthen's volume 'The Early Years, 1885–1912,' a relatively svelte 626 pages. The second, Mark Kinkead-Weekes's 'Triumph to Exile, 1912–1922,' is the size of a cobblestone and weights almost four pounds. It tracks Lawrence from May 3, 1912 (when he fled England for Germany with Freida Weekley née von Richthofen), to Feb. 26, 1922 (when he and Freida, long since married, sailed from Naples for Sri Lanka). This span of nine years occupies Mr. Kinkead-Weekes for 718 large, closely printed pages, to which are added 225 of appendixes, notes and indexes. That's about a page for every three and a half days of Lawrence's life. The trend is ominous."

Walter Kendrick, *NYTBR* Dec. 15, 1996: 30–31.

LÉAUTAUD, PAUL

Amours. Paul Léautaud. Collection "L'imaginaire" no. 345 (re-edition Mercure de France, 1939). Paris: Gallimard, 1996. 110 pp. F39.

This autobiography is a lively evocation of "the green paradise of puppy love." Léautaud discovered love with Jeanne Ambert in a state of cheerful innocence. When she left, she consoled him by saying "All great poets have had an unhappy love. It will incite you to work." Indeed Léautaud marvels at the exactness of the prediction, as he feels the indelible mark of a carefree passion. Personal and sober narrative, style pure and simple: one is conquered.

Bulletin Critique du Livre Français 573–74 (June-July 1996): 978.

LEESON, NICHOLAS W.

The Collapse of Barings. Stephen Fay. New York: Norton, 1996. 310 pp. $27.50.

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"The strongest part of Mr. Fay's book is its wise assessment of the ways that scandal has eroded confidence in the regulatory safety net in Britain and beyond. But he makes a hash of describing the futures and options markets in which Mr. Leeson operated—even the rogue's own account is clearer. He spends the last 10 percent of the book questioning the quality and credibility of the source material he relied on for the first 90 percent."

Diana B. Henriques, *NYTBR* Feb. 16, 1997: 10.

LEONARDO DA VINCI

Leonardo da Vinci. Diane Stanley. New York: Morrow Junior Books, 1996. Unpaged. $16.00.

"'Leonardo da Vinci' is quite comprehensive, following the artist's career through to his death at the age of 67, but small children are unlikely to appreciate either the volume of the information it contains or the sumptuous illustrations, which are executed in a style remarkably reminiscent of the Old Masters. There's a bibliography and suggested other readings to conclude this distinguished volume, which is a first-class production in every way."

Leslie Bennetts, *NYTBR* Dec. 8, 1996: 78.

LEVI, PRIMO

La Tragédie d'un Optimiste. Myriam Anissimov. Paris: J. C. Lattès, 1996. 698 pp. F175.

Racial laws in Italy made the young Primo Levi realize he was a Jew. Owing to his scientific turn of mind, the hell of Auschwitz did not stop his desire to understand ("it was appalling but new, appallingly new"). His first telling of the tragedy was written in so limpid a style that it makes all literature seem obscene, but he was not recognized, stopped writing for sixteen years, and finally committed suicide because his memory proved too narrow to contain his recollections of Auschwitz.

Hector Bianciotti, *Le Monde des Livres* 25 Oct. 1996: 1, 4.

LONDON, FRITZ

Fritz London: A Scientific Biography. Kostas Gavroglu. New York: Cambridge UP, 1995. 299 pp. $69.95 or £50.

"London the philosopher was ponderous and dull, prisoner of a dreadful German academic style. London the physicist was inspired. . . . His troubled journey from East Prussia to North Carolina, though cut short by his death at 54, turned out unexpectedly well. It did so (one may suspect) not least because of his marriage to a determined and very gifted woman, the artist Edith Gaspary."

C. W. F. Everitt, *Science* 272 No. 5266 (May 31, 1996): 1273–4.

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LOUYS, PIERRE AND JEAN DE TINAN

Correspondance 1894–1898. Ed. Jean-Paul Goujon. Paris: Editions du limon, "ego scriptor," 1995. 429 pp.

A well-annotated volume of correspondence which elucidates many biographical allusions and traces the friendship between Pierre Louys and Jean de Tinan, until Tinan's tragic death. The work also contains an index and a bibliography.

Denis Pernot, *Revue d'histoire litteraire de la France* 96.5 (1996): 1052.

MANDELA, NELSON

Mandela: From the Life of the South African Statesman. Floyd Cooper. New York: Philomel, 1996. 40 pp. $15.95.

"Mr. Cooper's glowing illustrations convey character with particular eloquence, but he is somewhat less successful as a writer. The text is cluttered with complex African place names and marginally relevant proper names that may intimidate a young child. It contains passing references to unexplained conflicts of British colonialism in Africa; and Mr. Cooper uses language that will be difficult for children of this age [5–7] to understand. Nevertheless, the story is an inspiring one, particularly if parents or teachers use the book as an opportunity to fill in some of the more troublesome blanks."

Leslie Bennetts, *NYTBR* Dec. 8, 1996: 78.

MANN, KLAUS.

Journal: Les années brunes, 1931–1936 (Tagebücher). Klaus Mann. Selected and trans. Pierre-François Kaempf. Paris: Grasset, 1996. 454 pp. F247.

In the first part of Klaus Mann's recently translated *Journal*, one will not find a single line really *written:* it is a mere, and sometimes telegraphic, inventory, a flat statement of accounts, useless to those who don't know his books. But to those who do, it is an irreplaceable document. By effacing himself, Mann paints an involuntary self-portrait of the young man twice torn: by the advent of the Nazis and by the hellish atmosphere of an Atridean family.

Pierre Lepape, *Le Monde des Livres* 6 Dec. 1996: 2.

MAO ZEDONG

Hungry Ghosts: Mao's Secret Famine. Jasper Becker. New York: Free Press, 1997. 352 pp. $25.00.

"The author, Jasper Becker, is a British journalist who served as Beijing bureau chief for the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post. Ably drawing on Western academic sources, unpublished Chinese Government documents he has obtained and hundreds of interviews with famine survivors conducted both in China and beyond its

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borders, Mr. Becker manages to re-create the cataclysm in chilling—at times almost unbearable—detail."

Nicholas Ebersadt, *NYTBR* Feb. 16, 1997: 6–7.

MARGARET, PRINCESS

Princess Margaret: A Biography. Theo Aronson. London: O'Mara, 1996. 330 pp. £16.99.

"Theo Aronson is a practised royal biographer who writes with a fluidity that only intermittently turns to gush. It is good to find royal gossip in which no one is absurdly inflated and no one is viciously demeaned. And though it is not his purpose, Aronson has produced much evidence on the fantasies behind Britain's current moral panic."

Richard Davenport-Hines, *TLS* Feb. 14, 1997: 32.

MELVILLE, HERMAN

Herman Melville: A Biography. Vol. 1: *1819–1851.* Hershel Parker. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996. 928 pp. $39.95.

"The book is some 900 pages long, and even so counts merely as Volume 1, with Melville 32 years old at the end, fondling the first printed copies of 'Moby Dick.' Mr. Parker is a professor of English at the University of Delaware, and his fanaticism for exactitude is such that he gives us not just the tiniest of details, but the details about the details. . . . Whole forests among these details are new, and among the million fresh facts, the most striking, as I judge them, reveal the commercial dealings of Melville's father."

Paul Berman, *NYTBR* Dec. 22, 1996: 12.

"[The] demon of inclusion guided the hand of Hershel Parker in fashioning his biography of Herman Melville. Or rather not quite half of Melville. For this massive book, the first of a projected two-volume work, covers only the first 32 years from Melville's birth in Lower Manhattan in 1819 to the publication of 'Moby Dick' in 1851. It is without question a monumental achievement, with all that implies of scale and labor and reverential overkill."

David Laskin, *WN* Dec. 23, 1996–Jan. 5, 1997: 37.

AND *Strike Through the Mask: Herman Melville and the Scene of the Writing.* Elizabeth Renker. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996. 200 pp. $35.00.

"It is fitting that the author of a whale of a *Whale* should be the subject of this whale of a biography. Hershel Parker's *magnum opus* is a magisterial work of retrieval and unflagging scholarship, whose sheer diversity of detail adds human complexity to what earlier often seemed no more than an inert chronicle. It caps all previous endeavors." Renker provides "the only real evidence that is new" about Melville's relationship to, and abuse of, his wife.

Harold Beaver, *TLS* Jan. 10, 1997: 3–4.

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MENDEL, GREGOR

Gregor Mendel: The First Geneticist. Vítezslav Orel. Trans. Stephen Finn. New York: Oxford UP, 1996. 363 pp. $49.95 or £29.50.

"As emeritus director of the Museum Mendelianum in Brno, Orel writes from an unrivaled position of authority. . . . The book offers an extensive overview of debates in the interpretation of Mendel's life and work and a valuable description of the economic and political climate in which Mendel made his great contribution to science."

Robert Olby, *Science* 275, No. 5305 (Mar. 7, 1997): 1438.

MITTERAND, FRANÇOIS

Portrait d'un artiste. Alain Duhamel. Paris: Flammarion, 1997. 312 pp. F120.

Duhamel's book is one of the many written on Mitterrand after his death. No surprises, no revelations here—except that as early as 1981 Mitterand had informed his Premier, Pierre Mauroy, about his cancer—but a portrait of "that devil of a man" with his thousand facets, and a first appraisal of his political action. Penetrating, brilliant, but carefully balanced, the seasoned analyst concludes that the masterpiece of that artist in politics was . . . himself.

Gérard Courtois, *Le Monde des Livres* 10 Jan. 1997: 1.

MUHAMMAD, ELIJAH

An Original Man: The Life and Times of Elijah Muhammad. Claude Andrew Clegg 3d. New York: St. Martin's, 1997. 377 pp. $25.95.

"Claude Andrew Clegg 3d, a professor of history at North Carolina A&T State University, has brought Muhammad to light in a fluidly written biography rich with information, analysis and suspense."

Jill Nelson, *NYTBR* Feb. 23, 1997: 19.

NGUYEN, LONG CUONG AND GEORGES WALTER

La Montagne des Parfums. Cuong Long Nguyen and Georges Walter. Pref. Georges Walter. Collection "Vécu." Paris: Robert Laffont-Phebus, 1996. 460 pp. 16 plates. F139.

Born in Haiphong in 1934, Cuong will undergo all the stages of the Vietnamese tragedy: Japanese and Chinese occupations, the bombing of Haiphong by the French, Viêt-Minh maquis, French prisons in Hanoi, escape to the South before his departure for Europe in 1957. He had no rest until his family was reunited, unfortunately far from their homeland. A poignant narrative of the tragedy of a people torn apart.

Bulletin Critique du Livre Français 573–74 (June-July 1996): 979.

NIETZSCHE, FRIEDRICH

Nietzsche in Turin: The End of the Future. Lesley Chamberlain. London: Quartet, 1996. 250 pp. £10.

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". . . few English-speaking writers have tried to 'befriend' him in the passionate committed way that Lesley Chamberlain has in *Nietzsche in Turin*. She is largely successful in doing so, despite a tendency to yield to the novelistic. . . . She is alert to the emotional needs which might have kept Nietzsche writing even when his catastrophic understanding of the world might have crushed him with despair."

Ian Bamforth, *TLS* Feb. 14, 1997: 31.

PAGE, MYRA

In a Generous Spirit: A First Person Biography of Myra Page. Christina Looper Barker. Champaign: U of Illinois P, 1996. 273 pp. $48.95 cloth, $15.95 paper.

"A problem with this [first-person] style of narrative, somewhere between biography and oral history, however, is the lack of precision, historical detail and fact-finding possible with more traditional biography. . . . *In a Generous Spirit* allows us to hear Page, in her own voice, describe the pain of her betrayal by Communism and her defeat by McCarthyism."

Suzanne Sowinska, *Women's Review of Books* 14.6 (Mar. 1997): 24–5.

PAVAROTTI, LUCIANO. See DOMINGO, PLÁCIDO.

PAYNE-GAPOSCHKIN, CECILIA

Cecilia Payne-Gaposchkin: An Autobiography and Other Recollections. Ed. Katherine Haramundanis. 2d ed. New York: Cambridge UP, 1996. 227 pp. $19.95.

"Payne-Gaposchkin (1900–1980) was an astronomer who in spite of the disadvantage of being a woman at Harvard in her era made important contributions to the understanding of stellar atmospheres."

Katherine Livingston, *Science* 273, No. 5279 (Aug. 30, 1996): 1180.

PERKINS, MAXWELL. See HEMINGWAY, ERNEST.

PINTER, HAROLD

The Life and Work of Harold Pinter. Michael Billington. London: Faber and Faber, 1996. 414 pp. £20.

Billington's two avowed "revelations" are that Pinter was not an objective, detached, cold playwright, but was highly autobiographical, and that politics weighed heavily on his plays, in which he stages the permanent conflict between individual conscience and power. This can be traced back to various former Pinters: the conscientious objector, the advocate of civil disobedience, and ultimately, the "cockney Jewish lad" of Russian descent he never ceased to be.

Jean-Louis Perrier, *Le Monde des Livres* 18 Oct. 1996: 2.

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POLLOCK, JACKSON

The Fate of a Gesture: Jackson Pollock and Postwar American Art. Carter Ratcliff. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1996. 352 pp. $35.00.

"... although the book's underlying thesis is surely open to question at many points, and the writing is haltingly awkward at times, 'The Fate of a Gesture' is a provocative and rewarding text. Calling Pollock to his aid at every twist and turn in the vast labyrinth of modern American art, Mr. Ratcliff has written about those aspects of it that interest him most. When he is thus engaged, he writes with an insight born of long personal experience, combining expert knowledge with a questioning eye."

Michael Peppiat, *NYTBR* Feb. 16, 1997: 9.

PRIN, ALICE

Kiki's Memoirs. Ed. Billy Külver and Julie Martin. New York: Ecco, 1996. 176 pp. $23.00.

"Billy Külver and Julie Martin, the editors of this lively new edition, have included fresh biographical material, familiar as well as lesser-known photographs of Kiki by Man Ray, portraits by other artists and reproductions of Kiki's paintings. Though hardly the stuff of scandal today, 'Kiki's Memoirs' is nonetheless suffused with a wayward charm as insouciant as Kiki herself."

Andrea Barnet, *NYTBR* Mar. 16, 1997: 20.

PROUST, MARCEL

L'Impossible Marcel Proust. Roger Duchene. Paris: Robert Laffont, 1995. 841 pp. F198.

"Duchene, the author of works on Mme de Sevigne, Pascal, Ninon de Lenclos, Mme de La Fayette, La Fontaine to mention but a few, has written an immensely readable biography of Proust. Not only is it well documented, but it makes available the latest findings re Proust's childhood, adolescence, maturity, and his evolution as a writer."

Bettina L. Knapp, *The French Review* 70.4 (Mar. 1997): 334–5.

RADJAB, MUHAMMAD AND P. NAISPOSPOS

Telling Lives, Telling History: Autobiography and Historical Imagination in Modern Indonesia. Ed., Trans., and Intro. Susan Rodgers. Berkeley: U of California P, 1995. 333 pp. $55.00 cloth, $20.00 paper.

"Susan Rodgers has provided excellent English translations of two memoirs by Sumatrans, both originally published in 1950 by the Indonesian government printing house Balai Pustaka. In each case the perspective is that of a literate but politically insignificant man in his thirties. The books are Muhammad Radjab's *Village Childhood* and P. Pospos's [pseudonym] *Me and Toba: Notes from Childhood Times.*"

Charles A. Coppel, *Journal of Asian Studies* 55.4 (Nov. 1996): 1079–80.

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RAPAPORT, ERA

Letters from Tel Mond Prison: An Israeli Settler Defends his Act of Terrorism. Era Rapaport. Ed. William Helmreich. New York: Free Press, 1996. 280 pp. $23.00.

" . . . half memoir, half manifesto . . . what we learn from Rapaport and his book is that peace in the Middle East is caught between an irresistible force and an immovable object, the true believer and his holy books."

Jonathan Kirsch, *LATBR* Jan. 19, 1997: 8.

RATTIGAN, TERENCE

Terence Rattigan. Geoffrey Wansell. London: Fourth Estate. 434 pp. £8.99.

"Although Rattigan wrote exactly the same number of produced screenplays as stage plays (22), both posterity and his latest biographer persist in seeing him as a stage dramatist who prostituted himself to the movies to finance a luxury lifestyle."

Sight and Sound 7.2 (Feb. 1997): 34.

ROCKEFELLER, NELSON A.

The Life of Nelson A. Rockefeller: Worlds to Conquer, 1908–1958. Cary Reich. New York: Doubleday, 1996. 875 pp. $48.50.

"Rockefeller's governorship begins just as 'Worlds to Conquer' ends, but another volume is coming. Reich's first shows impressive scholarship, but it must be said that, at eight hundred and seventy-five pages, this is a lot of Nelson Rockefeller."

Andrew Ferguson, *The New Yorker* Jan. 6, 1997: 69–72.

"... and what a magnificent biography Cary Reich has given us. This monumental first volume carries only through Rockefeller's triumphant 1958 campaign for the New York governorship, but at the start Reich promises us that Rockefeller's life before the governorship, before the presidential campaigns, 'was more than prologue, but a wondrous story in itself.' He is right. It is a wonderful story."

Richard Gid Powers, *WP* Dec. 16-22, 1996: 37.

ROLLAND, ROMAIN AND ALPHONSE DE CHATEAUBRIANT

L'Un et L'Autre. Correspondance entre Romain Rolland et Alphonse de Chateaubriant. Vol. II. *Choix de Lettres.* Pref. and annotations L. A. Maugendre. Collection "Cahiers Romain Rolland." Paris: Albin Michel, 1996. 482 pp. F150.

This volumes main biographical interest is that it covers the period when the two friends, both mystics, converted to antagonistic ideologies: communism for Rolland, national socialism for Chateaubriant. The main scientific interest comes, of course, from their exchanging

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views on politics, civilization, and literature. The book aims at enhancing the figure of Chateaubriant, who hardly deserves it.

Bulletin Critique du Livre Français 573–74 (June-July 1996): 980.

ROMBAUER, IRMA AND MARION

Stand Facing the Stove: The Story of the Women Who Gave America The Joy of Cooking. Anne Mendelson. New York: Holt, 1996. 608 pp. $29.95.

"'Stand Facing the Stove,' which could so easily have turned out to be merely a curiosity, is, in addition to being an entertaining double biography of a mother and daughter, a detailed social history that opens up to offer a broad view of twentieth-century America."

Nancy Franklin, *New Yorker* Jan. 6, 1997: 66–9.

"Mendelson dishes up the tale like a skilled hostess: she whets our appetites with an assortment of curious facts and intriguing observations, and then sits us down to a carefully crafted dinner. With more than 400 footnoted pages and a cast worthy of Tolstoy, this is no light meal."

The Smithsonian Mar. 1997: 139–41.

ROOSEVELT, ELEANOR

Eleanor. Barbara Cooney. New York: Viking, 1996. 40 pp. $15.99.

"Ms. Cooney's tale is affecting; any child will find it easy to relate to this classic account of an ugly duckling, as Eleanor becomes a teenager and gains confidence under the tutelage of an attentive boarding-school mistress. . . . Unfortunately, Ms. Cooney ends with Eleanor's schooling, relegating the extraordinary accomplishments of her adult life to a few dry sentences in an afterword."

Leslie Bennetts, *NYTBR* Dec. 8, 1996: 78.

ROTHSCHILD, MEYER

Founder: Meyer Amschel Rothschild and His Time. Amos Elon. New York: HarperCollins, 1996. 208 pp. $24.95.

"... Elon has succeeded in this perforce slender biography, *Founder,* in giving us a more vivid scene of the man, at least by inference, than we have thus had from any of the numerous chronicles of the Rothschild legend."

A. J. Sherman, *TLS* Jan. 17, 1997: 18.

RUSSELL, BERTRAND

Bertrand Russell: The Spirit of Solitude, 1872–1921. Ray Monk. New York: Free Press, 1996. 695 pp. $35.00.

Monk "writes with a sharply well-defined 'take' on his subject, which determines how he reads the evidence and what construction to place

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on it. The result is a huge volume that brings Russell before us in vivid detail (huge, but only the first of two; this one takes us to the halfway point of Russell's life in the 1920's). . . . Indeed, one might describe the detail as livid rather than vivid, for it soon appears that Mr. Monk dislikes Russell intensely; and this fact gives the book its shape and feel."

A. C. Grayling, *NYTBR* Dec. 29, 1996: 5.

RUSTIN, BAYARD

Bayard Rustin: Troubles I've Seen. Jervis Anderson. New York: HarperCollins, 1997. 418 pp. $30.00.

"Rustin was astute, charming, and dedicated, and Anderson—a longtime *New Yorker* contributor—captures him in all his variety, bringing to the task his own familiarity with the African-American, pacifist, and labor movements, in which Rustin played a part."

The New Yorker Mar. 24, 1997: 83.

"Mr. Anderson worked at the A. Philip Randolph Institute when Rustin was its executive director in the later 1960's, and has been a staff writer at *The New Yorker* since 1968. 'Bayard Rustin: Troubles I've Seen' reflects both experiences: a reverence for Rustin that Mr. Anderson evidently derived from his association with him, and a clean, straightforward prose style characteristic of the magazine for which he works. He provides a thorough account of Rustin's life and career, and he suggests how Rustin became so eminent a figure without becoming a genuine leader."

Alan Brinkley, *NYTBR* Mar. 2, 1997: 13–14.

SAINT LAURENT, YVES

Yves Saint Laurent: A Biography. Alice Rawsthorn. New York: Nan A. Talese/Doubleday, 1996. 405 pp. $27.50.

"As an account of the troubled life of a brilliant designer, this book contains too many long-winded passages of economic exposition to sustain the interest of the reader in search of the man himself."

Holly Brubach, *NYTBR* Jan. 12, 1997: 14–15.

SAATCHI, CHARLES AND MAURICE

Conflicting Accounts: The Creation and Crash of the Saatchi & Saatchi Advertising Empire. Kevin Goldman. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997. 384 pp. $26.00.

"Kevin Goldman covered the Saatchi and Saatchi downfall as *The Wall Street Journal*'s advertising columnist. His chronicle of this modern business horror story, rich in detail, leaves you wanting to bathe after each chapter."

David Diamond, *NYTBR* Feb. 27, 1997: 17.

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SADE, LE MARQUIS DE

Papiers de famille: le marquis et les siens (1761–1815). Ed. Maurice Lever. "Bibliotheque Sade" Vol. II. Paris: Fayard, 1995. 761 pp. F359.

"La Bibliotheque Sade," under the direction of Maurice Lever, will comprise seven volumes: the first two will contain the *Papiers de famille;* the next three will include the *Correspondance;* the sixth volume, which has already been published, contains the first complete edition of *Opus Sadianum,* and *Voyage d'Italie;* and the seventh volume will be *Textes et opuscules in dits.* This second volume contains 1,390 letters and documents from the Sade family archives.

Sylvie Dangeville, *The French Review* 70.4 (Mar. 1997): 327–8.

SAINT-EXUPERY, ANTOINE

Saint-Exupery: A Biography. Stacy Schiff. New York: Knopf, 1994. 515 pp. $30.00.

"Schiff's knowledge of circumstantial minutiae is staggering. . . . By illuminating so many corners of so many hitherto shadowy events in his life, Schiff creates the impression that nothing remains veiled about this highly enigmatic figure and that the myth has finally been laid to rest, not by debunking, but by courteous, compassionate, yet unrelenting dissection."

John R. Harris, *Romance Quarterly* 43.4 (Fall 1996): 235–6.

SELLERS, PETER

The Life and Death of Peter Sellers. Roger Lewis. New York: Applause, 1996. 500 pp. $24.95.

"'The Life And Death Of Peter Sellers' is initially impressive, particularly in the vivid picture it paints of the entertainment business in postwar England, but the relentless detail is ultimately daunting. Everything one could possibly want to know about Sellers is contained in this book—and a great deal more besides."

Pamela Wilson, *NYTBR* Dec. 15, 1996: 26–7.

SENI PRAMOJ, M. R.

Thailand's Struggle for Democracy: The Life and Times of M. R. Seni Pramoj. David Van Praagh. New York: Holmes and Meier, 1996. 358 pp. $34.95.

"David Van Praagh's revised biography of M. R. Seni Pramoj offers a reedited text, extensive coverage of recent Thai politics, and a new introduction that attempts to relate democratization in Thailand to the same process in other Asian countries. . . . It is to be hoped that Seni's next biographer will provide a more balanced historical context for his political career and assess his role more critically."

E. Bruce Reynolds, *Journal of Asian Studies* 55.4 (Nov. 1996): 1099–1100.

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Soddy, Frederick

The World Made New: Frederick Soddy, Science, Politics, and Environment. Linda Merricks. New York: Oxford UP, 1996. 223 pp. $105 or £60.

"Merricks stresses Soddy's prescience: about atomic energy, the social relations of science, the danger of war, European federalism, and environmental economics. But although she contextualizes Soddy by looking in some detail at marginal political and intellectual groupings of the interwar years, she does not recognize the extent to which his general ideas were fairly common, even among scientists."

D. E. H. Edgerton, *Science* 274, No. 5293 (Dec. 6, 1996): 1628.

Spielberg, Steven

Steven Spielberg: Father to the Man. Andrew Yule. London: Little Brown, 1996. 395 pp. £16.99.

"Following hard on the heels of John Baxter's frosty Unauthorised Biography, Yule hasn't much new to offer, nor many more films to cover. . . . Readable, but the chatty tone of the prose gets on one's nerves after a while."

Sight and Sound 7.2 (Feb. 1997): 34.

Stein, Gertrude

The Letters of Gertrude Stein and Thornton Wilder. Ed. Edward Burns and Ulla E. Dydo with William Rice. New Haven: Yale UP, 1996. 415 pp. $35.00.

"For ten years, until Wilder let the correspondence lapse, he and Stein recorded their friendship in the breathless letters collected here by editors well versed in Steiniana. Edward Burns, an English professor at William Patterson College of New Jersey, is the editor of a pungent assortment of Alice Toklas's letters and has also annotated the correspondence between Gertrude Stein and Carl Van Vechten; Ulla E. Dydo is the editor of 'A Stein Reader.' With William Rice, a researcher, they have superbly assembled the Stein-Wilder letters, nestling them between copious footnotes (often longer than the actual letters) and extensive appendixes (11 in all). But all this scholarly exuberance cannot camouflage the fact that if left to itself, the correspondence would be pretty thin gruel."

Brenda Wineapple, *NYTBR* Jan. 12, 1997: 26.

Taylor, Geoffrey Ingram

The Life and Legacy of G. I. Taylor. George Batchelor. New York: Cambridge UP, 1996. 285 pp. $75.00 or £45.

"Taylor . . . made major contributions to the fields of fluid and solid mechanics, including meterology, physical oceanography, fracture mechanics, plasticity, turbulence, and much else. . . . Scientists who

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have encountered any of the remarkable numberof Taylor's ideas in classical physics will find this book interesting."

Carl Wunsch, *Science* 274, No. 5294 (13 Dec. 1996): 1846.

TCHAIKOVSKY, PETER

Tchaikovsky's Last Days: A Documentary Study. Alexander Poznansky. New York: Clarendon/Oxford UP, 1996. 224 pp. $29.95.

"...Alexander Poznansky, a librarian of the Slavic and East European Collection at the Yale University Library, has spent five years assembling all the documentary evidence about the composer's last months, including much new information dug out of the Tchaikovsky archives in Klin, Russia, which were severely restricted until a few years ago. In 'Tchaikovsky's Last Days," he presents it in English—news accounts, diaries, journals, letters, reminiscences and more. He gives his own opinions about all this soberly and quietly, and he provides an invaluable account of the sexual mores of Russians in the 19th century (people who know no Russian social history are likely to be surprised.)"

D. J. R. Bruckner, *NYTBR* Feb. 2, 1997: 22.

TERKEL, STUDS

Studs Terkel: A Life in Words. Tony Parker. New York: Holt, 1996. 237 pp. $27.50.

"Mr. Terkel would have ferreted out, without malice, the darker side [if he had been the author of this book]. How strange that an interviewer so headstrong in seeking facts should be the subject of cloying writing. Perhaps Studs Terkel will enjoy the irony."

Peggy Constantine, *NYTBR* Dec. 29, 1996: 15.

VAN GOGH, VINCENT

The Letters of Vincent Van Gogh. Selected and ed. Ronald de Leeuw. New York: Allen Lane/Penguin, 1996. 528 pp. $32.95.

"...the personality that emerges from these letters is never incoherent or deranged.... This absorbing collection elaborates yet another side of this beguiling and brilliant artist."

Andrea Barnett, *NYTBR* Jan. 19, 1997: 19.

VERNE, JULES

Jules Verne: An Exploratory Biography. Herbert R. Lottman. New York: St. Martin's, 1997. 366 pp. $21.00.

"Verne thought his own life uninteresting—a judgment Herman R. Lottman's pedestrian biography does little to disturb. (Perhaps he works best with newer material, as his 'Albert Camus.') It is liveliest on Verne's relations with Hetzel [his publisher]. If the novelist knew

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pretty well what he was good at, the publisher knew even better. For him, marketing was part of editing."

Julian Barnes, *NYTBR* Jan. 26, 1997: 4.

WALTER, GEORGES. See NGUYEN, LONG CUONG.

WARREN, ROBERT PENN

Robert Penn Warren: A Biography. Joseph Blotner. New York: Random House, 1997. 585 pp. $35.00.

"Mr. Blotner is best known for his overstuffed biography of William Faulkner, published in 1974. 'Robert Penn Warren: A Biography' is altogether more fluent and compelling. Mr. Blotner, who began this book with Warren's approval and help, has written an affectionate and adulatory narrative. For some readers . . . his psychologizing will seem rather quaint, his tone too hushed and his prose merely earnest. But he has gathered a great deal of important information and shaped it deftly. . . . Mr. Blotner's biography is likely to remain definitive."

J. D. McClatchy, *NYTBR* Mar. 9, 1997: 11–12.

In light of Warren's later work, his career should be reexamined: "Now perhaps a reappraisal has begun with Joseph Blotner's meticulously researched and readable biography."

Jay Parini, *TLS* Feb. 28, 1997: 5–6.

WASHINGTON, GEORGE

George Washington: Writings. Ed. John H. Rhodehamel. New York: Library of America, 1997. 1149 pp. $40.00.

" . . . Washington as consumer, creditor, debtor, kinsman, adversary, friend; confidant, schemer, supplicant; planter, slaveholder and—finally—emancipator . . . the fallible, anxious, remarkable man without whom the United States as we know it could not exist."

Fred Anderson, *LATBR* Feb 23, 1997: 3.

WEBER, MAX

Max Weber, sa vie, son oeuvre, son influence. Dirk Kaesler. Trans. Philippe Fritsch. Paris: Fayard, 1996. 292 pp. F150.

When Max Weber died in 1920, his wife saw to it that Else von Richthofen did not appear in his biography. But Fritsch, while placing the sociologist in the forefront—first unrecognized, then illustrious to the extent of becoming a mandatory reference and the supplier of many "hit" formulas—also shows us the man, who was in many respects exceptional: a man of vast culture and erudition, scientific rigor, indeed "the international saint of German knowledge."

Georges Balandier, *Le Monde des Livres* Nov. 1, 1996: 7.

WILDER, THORNTON. See STEIN, GERTRUDE.

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WILSON, EDWARD O.

Naturalist. Edward O. Wilson. Washington, D.C.: Island Press/A Shearwater Book, 1994. 380 pp. $24.95.

"Edward O. Wilson has literally changed the practice of the natural sciences, especially reshaping that sizable terrain where geography meets the living worlds of biogeography, evolutionary biology, and conservation studies. . . . Wilson's memoir, *Naturalist*, is an eminently readable book, a fun and gentle reminiscence and summary of the ways and miscues of someone growing into science."

Paul F. Starrs, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 86.2 (June 1996): 358–60.

ZOLA, EMILE

Correspondance. Ed. B. H. Bakker. Montreal and Paris: Les Presses de l'Universite de Montreal and Editions du CNRS. Vol. 9: *1897–1899.* 1993. 603 pp. $68.00 CDN. Vol. 10: *1899–1902.* 1995. 647 pp. $68.00 CDN.

Volume 9 is an "impressive volume of letters dating from the period during which the author is involved in the Dreyfus Affair. This edition chronicles Zola's personal difficulties and traces the evolution of his political ideas; it also contains material designed to help the reader appreciate the letters and information on Zola's principal correspondents. Useful to scholars and general readers." Volume 10 is the "last volume of an immense project whose first volume was published in 1978. It includes the letters written after Zola's return from exile in England, and recently discovered correspondences from before October 1899. It also contains a general index of the ten volumes."

Hollie Markland Harder (Vol. 9) and Warren Johnson (Vol. 10), *The French Review* 70.3 (Feb. 1997): 473–4.

Collections, Group Biographies, and Works of Interest

THE AGA KHANS

Throne of Gold: The Lives of the Aga Khans. Ann Edwards. New York: William Morrow, 1996. 346 pp. $25.00.

"Ultimately, though, 'Throne of Gold" fails to live up to its auspicious start. While the story moves forward in workmanlike fashion, the prose is bloodless and the sources and details are thin, particularly when Ms. Edwards uses phrases like 'a rumor was later to circulate' or 'the story goes'; interviews with sources who knew the Khans are only infrequently cited. Of the few interviews claimed, none are attributed by name. The author clearly had no success in speaking with the intensely private Aga Khan IV, but there is no indication that she even tried."

Christopher Ogden, *NYTBR* Dec. 8, 1996: 96.

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BANKERS

The Bankers: The Next Generation. Martin Mayer. New York: Truman Talley/Dutton, 1996. 514 pp. $29.95.

"'The Bankers' can be heavy going for the uninitiated. But that's just Mr. Mayer showing off. Follow his unusually delightful ramble through the board rooms and byways of finance, and you'll learn more about banking than you ever thought you wanted to know."

Peter Passell, *NYTBR* Jan. 12, 1997: 10–11.

BIOGRAPHIES FOR CHILDREN. See LEONARDO DA VINCI; MANDELA, NELSON; AND ROOSEVELT, ELEANOR.

CHILDREN OF THE HOLOCAUST

French Children of the Holocaust: A Memorial. Serge Klarsfeld. New York: New York UP, 1996. 1881 pp. $95.00.

"Mr. Klarsfeld, who was hunted by the Gestapo as a child, and whose father died in Auschwitz, is best known as a Nazi hunter. Yet he spent decades restoring the names of 11,400 French Jewish children who were deported during World War II. Most were put to death in Nazi camps. Along with the 2,500 photographs he retrieved from family members and archives, he provides first and last names, addresses, birth dates, brief biographies of each child and, in some cases, last letters."

Susan Shapiro, *NYTBR* Feb. 9, 1997: 21.

DICTIONARY MAKERS

Chasing the Sun: Dictionary Makers and the Dictionaries They Made. Jonathon Green. New York: Holt, 1996. 510 pp. $30.00.

"Though full of odd, surprising facts, such as that the first known dictionaries were cuneiform tablets that translated Sumerian into Akkadian, this first-rate history is not merely a compilation of trivia."

The New Yorker Jan. 20, 1997: 97.

"If you are comfortable with bookish expressions like '24mo.' and 'arbiter elegantiae,' you will find the book worth-while reading. The disappointment is that it doesn't rise from the scholarly to the human level."

Pat Ryan, *NYTBR* Mar. 2, 1997: 19.

EUNUCHS

The Invisibles: A Tale of Eunuchs. Zia Jaffrey. New York: Pantheon, 1996. 293 pp. $24.00.

"On a visit to Delhi, Jaffrey attended a wedding at which a troupe of men dressed in shabby saris suddenly appeared and began to chant

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obscene songs. . . . Puzzled and curious, she began to investigate their lives, and her book is a triumph of humaneness, tact and sympathy."

The New Yorker Jan. 20, 1997: 97.

MANAGEMENT GURUS

The Witch Doctors: Making Sense of the Management Gurus. John Micklewait and Adrian Woodridge. New York: Times Books/Random House, 1996. 369 pp. $25.00.

"In 'The Witch Doctors' Mr. Micklewait and Mr. Woodridge deliver sharp insights about a group of people who seriously influence millions of lives in corporate America."

Bruce Nussbaum, *NYTBR* Jan. 12, 1997: 34.

MEN AT HARVARD

Manhood at Harvard: William James and Others. Kim Townsend. New York: Norton, 1996. 318 pp. $29.95.

"Mr. Townsend, the Andrew W. Mellon Professor of English at Amherst College, sets out to show that Harvard was central to the emerging ideal of masculinity, and for those unfamiliar with the history of the university's most illustrious years, 'Manhood at Harvard' is a good introduction to the politics and personalities, the ideas and pieties of its faculty and some of its more famous students."

Tom Lutz, *NYTBR* Jan. 5, 1997: 16.

PRESIDENTIAL COUPLES

Affairs of State: The Rise and Rejection of the Presidential Couple Since World War II. Gil Troy. New York: Free Press, 1997. 486 pp. $27.50.

"After a while, there's a certain depressing familiarity in these story lines that creeps into the political culture: the stronger the woman appears to be the weaker the man must be. Mr. Troy, perhaps in an excess of *Realpolitik*, urges future First Couples essentially to resign themselves to these attitudes."

Robin Toner, *NYTBR* Feb. 2, 1997: 9.

THE REICHMANNS

The Reichmanns: Family, Faith, Fortune, and the Empire of Olympia and York. Anthony Bianco. New York: Times Books/Random House, 1997. 810 pp. $30.00.

"Anthony Bianco, a senior writer at *Business Week* and the author of 'Rainmaker,' a biography of the former Wall Street deal maker Jeff Beck, spent four years working on 'The Reichmanns.' The usually reclusive Paul Reichmann granted him five long interviews, and he was helped by other family members, but the result is far from hagiography, if that's what the hypersensitive family expected."

Mordecai Richler, *NYTBR* Feb. 9, 1997: 6–7.

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ROCK'N'ROLLERS

The Mansion on the Hill: Dylan, Young, Geffen, Springsteen, and the Head-on Collision of Rock and Commerce. Fred Goodman. New York: Times Books/Random House, 1997. 431 pp. $25.00.

"This enthralling history of what Goodman, a former editor at *Rolling Stone*, calls the 'head-on collision of rock and commerce' reads like a modern-day 'Faust,' underscoring the compromises of a generation that set out to sell its soul for rock and roll and settles for pawning rock and roll's soul instead."

The New Yorker Mar. 24, 1997: 83.

"'The Mansion on the Hill' provides an excellent chronicle of rock's sad metamorphosis from a quasi-moral force into an unstoppable money machine."

Charles Kaiser, *NYTBR* Mar. 2, 1997: 24.

SCIENTIFIC COUPLES

Creative Couples in the Sciences. Ed. Helena M. Pycior, Nancy G. Slack, and Pnina G. Aibr-Am. Lives of Women in Science. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1996. 369 pp. $50.00 cloth; $18.95 paper.

"In *Creative Couples in the Sciences* the editors focus on collaborative scientific marriages. The subject is a rich source for biographical studies of women in science, since marriage to a fellow scientist was often the best and sometimes the only way for a woman to work in science. . . . This is a valuable collection, well documented and highly readable. . . . It will undoubtedly serve as the basis for expanded biographies and a stimulus for further research."

Ruth Lewin Sime, *Science* 273, No. 5273 (July 19, 1996): 316.

WOMEN OF THE FAR RIGHT

Women of the Far Right: The Mothers' Movement and World War II. Glen Jeansonne. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1996. 264 pp. $16.95.

"Mr. Jeansonne complains that liberal historians of the period have not tried to understand the mothers' movement on their own terms. He tries to explore his subjects' psychological makeup and motivations. Unfortunately, this leads him into banal generalizations and sheer speculation. Despite his plea for understanding the mothers on their own terms, Mr. Jeansonne's own prose is determinedly partisan. Still, he does a useful service by bringing the forgotten story of these women to wider attention."

David Unger, *NYTBR* Jan. 12, 1997: 20.

WRITERS

The Man Behind the Book: Literary Profiles. Louis Auchincloss. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1996. 208 pp. $22.95.

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"A writer of dozens of novels and biographies about the upper-crust world to which he belongs, Mr. Auchincloss sets out in 'The Man Behind the Book' to pay homage to a surprising variety of writers who have influenced his work. . . . Mr. Auchincloss is perhaps too scrupulous in his literary perceptions to be an affective advocate."

David Kaufman, *NYTBR* Dec. 22, 1996: 14.

The Writer's Desk. Jill Krementz. New York: Random House, 1996. 110 pp. $35.00.

"For anyone interested in writers and their work, Ms. Krementz has provided a small but revealing look beneath the covers."

Robin Lippincott, *NYTBR* Feb. 16, 1997: 19.

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Lifelines

CORRECTION: Call for Papers: *William Carlos Williams and His Biographers.* For the 1998 MLA Convention, the William Carlos Williams Society seeks abstracts or 8–10 page papers. DEADLINE: 1 Oct. 1997. CONTACT: Peter Schmidt, English Dept., Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, PA 19081. The correct email address for Peter Schmidt is pschmid1@swarthmore.edu.

New Journal: *History of Psychology* will begin quarterly publishing early in 1998. Published by the American Psychological Association for its Division of the History of Psychology, and edited by Michael M. Sokal, Professor of History at the Worcester Polytechnic Institute, the journal will serve as a forum for the full range of current ideas and approaches pertaining to the relationship between history and psychology. It will primarily feature refereed scholarly articles on specific issues, areas, and individuals in the history of psychology. It will also publish in such related areas as historical psychology (the history of consciousness and behavior), theory in psychology as it pertains to history, historiography, biographical and autobiographical analysis, psychohistory, and issues involved in teaching the history of psychology. The journal will follow a double-blind submission policy; for author's instructions, subscription, and other information, please contact Michael M. Sokal, *History of Psychology,* Department of Humanities and Arts, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, 100 Institute Road, Worcester, MA 01609-2280; tel. (508) 831-5712; fax (508) 831-5932; msokal@wpi.edu; http://www.wpi.edu/~histpsy.

New Journal Name: The *REED Newsletter* is converting to the status of peer-reviewed annual journal under the name *Early Theatre: A Journal associated with the Records of Early English Drama. Early Theatre* welcomes research in medieval or early modern drama and theatre history, rooted in the records and documents of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales; and encourages articles or notes on related materials in Europe or other places where English or European travellers, traders, and colonizers observed performances by other peoples. Submissions on the performance history of any art, entertainment, or festive occasion of the period, as well as interpretive or literary articles relating to the performances themselves, are invited. Address correspondence and submissions to Helen Ostovich, Editor, *REED Newsletter/Early Theatre,* Department of English, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada L8S 4L9; ostovich@mcmaster.ca.

Call for Papers: *Post Identity,* a peer-reviewed, on-line and print journal, welcomes submissions that expose the cultural, political, and social construction of identities, and the implications of a "post

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identity" culture. The journal invites essays that explore notions of individual, social, and cultural identity formations; how such formations were and are constructed, maintained, and challenged; and the relationship between identity claims and texts. *Post Identity* welcomes a variety of theoretical perspectives, especially those that problematize the narratives underlying essentialist conceptions of identity. For futher information, contact Hugh Culik or Nicholas Rombes, Department of English, University of Detroit Mercy, P.O. Box 19900, Detroit, MI 48219-0900; postid@libarts.udmercy.edu.

Conference Call for Papers: *Crossroads in Cultural Studies Second International Conference*, June 28–July 1, 1998, Tampere, Finland. The special theme of the conference will be borders and border crossings, but it also provides an open forum for all topics that interest the international cultural studies community. Organized by the Department of Sociology and Social Psychology, University of Tampere, the conference goal is to show where cultural studies is going next. DEADLINE FOR SUGGESTED PANELS: 30 Sept. 1997. CONTACT: Crossroads in Cultural Studies, Tampere Conference Service, P.O. Box 32 (Pyhäjärvenkatu 1A), 33201 Tampere, Finland; tel. 358-3-3664400; fax 358-3-2226440; email: iscsmail@uta.fi; http://www.uta.fi/crossroads; or subscribe to the "crossroads" mailing list at listproc@uta.fi.

Conference Call for Papers: *The Seventh Annual Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century British Woman Writers Conference*, March 26-28, 1998, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, will offer a special series of panels on lesbianism, homoeroticism, and cross-gender issues in the works and lives of British women writers of the 18th and 19th centuries (sponsored by the Williamson Fund for Gay and Lesbian Studies). DEADLINE: 30 Sept. 1997. CONTACT: Direct inquiries, 1-2 page abstracts, or complete 20-minute presentations to Rick Incorvati at raincorv@email.unc.edu; or Rick Incorvati, English Department, CB# 3520, Greenlaw Hall, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3520; http://www.unc.edu/depts/bwwconf/home.html.

Call for Papers: *British Women Writers and the French Revolution.* In particular, essays on noncanonical writers or works are invited, though all relevant submissions are welcome. The volume has evolved from a 1996 MLA panel, and will include all the essays from that panel. DEADLINE: 2 Oct. 1997. CONTACT: Send papers of about 25 pages to Professor Kari Lokke, English Department, University of California at Davis, Davis, CA 95616. Please address email queries to Adriana Craciun at aezac@unix.ccc.nottingham.ac.uk or Kari Lokke at kelokke@ucdavis.edu.

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Georgia Johnston ("Virginia Woolf Revising Roger Fry Into the Frames of 'A Sketch of the Past'"), Assistant Professor of English at Saint Louis University, teaches courses in 20th-century British literature and autobiography. She is completing a manuscript on the politics of reading in 20th-century autobiographies.

John F. Keener ("Biography, Conspiracy, and the Oswald Enigma") recently received his doctoral degree from the University of Kentucky, where he teaches American literature. He is at work on a book that examines narrative and cultural representations of recent American historical figures.

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Published by the University of Hawai'i Press for the Biographical Research Center.
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ISSN 0162–4962

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Editor's Note

This issue brings *Biography*'s first twenty years to a close. Individual numbers have been getting thicker over the past year or two, as new features such as "Sketches from Life" and "Lifelines" have been added, and as our Book Review section and Reviewed Elsewhere have been expanded. Regular readers, however, will definitely notice that Volume 20, Number 4 is significantly larger than any previous issue.

The reasons for this will become obvious from the Table of Contents. An author, title, and subject index for our eighty installments, complete with an author, title, and reviewer index for our book reviews, appears as a healthy appendix to our regular issue. In addition, our annual bibliography of life-writing has been supplemented with entries from databases for fields not previously consulted. Both this index and the bibliography will be appearing soon on our home page, as the Center for Biographical Research adds to its online research resources and services.

Two other important events have also marked the transition from *Biography*'s first generation to its second. On August 1 of this year, George Simson, the founder of this journal, retired as Director of the Center for Biographical Research, and as Professor of English at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Thankfully, George will still be very much a part of the Center's ongoing work, and in the near future a special issue of *Biography* will pay tribute to his many achievements.

As we were going to press, another landmark event for this journal, and for the field of biography in general, occurred when on September 5, Leon Edel died at his residence in Honolulu. A more fitting remembrance will appear in a forthcoming issue; here I will simply note that it is hard to imagine any biographer or theorist of biography who has had a greater influence on our field.

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Suicide and Literary Biography: The Case of Hemingway

Richard K. Sanderson
and Rena Sanderson

Writing biography is commonly felt to resemble the act of mourning, and just as a suicidal death complicates the survivors' mourning, so does a subject's suicide complicate the biographical act. Our purpose here is to describe the effects of a subject's suicide on the forms taken by his or her biographies.[1]

On the face of it, setting out to preserve in writing the life of someone who found life not worth living might seem a paradoxical project. Moreover, though biography has outgrown its hagiographical origins, biographers tend to select subjects whose accomplishments, and often whose lives, they admire and respect. Nevertheless, since suicide is widely regarded as a shameful, cowardly, antisocial act, when an otherwise exemplary life ends ignobly, the general biographical formula which treats a subject's death as a comment on the life becomes problematic. Although a subject's suicide may appeal to the morbidity and voyeurism that are often said to underlie the biographical impulse, the biographer must still present it in ways that will not completely negate the subject's admirable qualities. A self-chosen death requires a reading of the life that will explain that seemingly unnatural choice.

Examining how biographers conceptualize and present the lives and deaths of subjects who kill themselves is a large task, and we will therefore limit our discussion in two ways. First, we will consider only works in the subgenre of literary biography.[2] Some statistical and biochemical evidence suggests that writers are at a greater-than-average risk for suicide (Jamison 49–99). Indeed, in *The Savage God*, A. Alvarez lays it down as a rule—though "in no way a firm rule"—that "the better the artist, the more vulnerable" to suicide (238). In any case, the list of suicided authors, from Arthur Adamov to Stefan

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Zweig, is certainly long enough to fill many flights of (possibly fallen) angels. Indeed, literary biographies probably comprise a majority of all biographies whose subjects committed suicide.

Believing that there is much to be learned from one fully realized example, we will further restrict most of our attention to the case of Ernest Hemingway, who has been the subject of numerous biographies, popular as well as scholarly, and whose suicide on July 2, 1961, made headlines around the world. When Hemingway received the Nobel prize for literature in 1954, in keeping with their charge to reward writing with "an ideal tendency," the Committee twice cited the line from *The Old Man and the Sea*, "But man is not made for defeat. . . . A man can be destroyed but not defeated" (*Old Man* 103; Österling). Given this sentiment, Hemingway's death seven years later came as a particular shock. The first suicide by a literary Nobel Laureate,[3] it seemed to violate Hemingway's own values. Its prototypical violence soon became a point of reference for discussing other suicides. Reflecting on the *seppuku* of Yukio Mishima, Henry Miller notes that "Shocking as it was, it affected us in quite another way than Hemingway's suicide, performed by putting a shotgun to his mouth and blowing his brains out" (11). And in the opening of his "novel biography" *Marilyn*, Norman Mailer lets two famous suicides largely define the 1960s—that of Marilyn Monroe ("the angel of sex") and that of Ernest Hemingway ("the monarch of the arts"). "Her death was covered over with ambiguity," Mailer writes, "even as Hemingway's was exploded into horror" (15).

Two further points should be noted about our focus on Hemingway. First, his exceptional fame as a writer and a celebrity gives us an (over)-abundance of material to work with and may limit our ability to generalize from his example to other cases. The treatment biographers have given to his life and death may in some respects be unrepresentative of the sub-subgenre we are examining. Every life is unique, every suicide is unique, and no one "case" can stand for all, but this is especially true for Hemingway simply because there is such an extensive, varied, and even contradictory record about his death. The penultimate section of this article, therefore, will set our tentative conclusions against some biographies of other suicided writers. Second, though Hemingway's death is our principal example, we do not intend to "rummage in that July

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dawn," as Oriana Fallaci puts it (Mary Hemingway, "My Husband Hemingway" 142), to reveal some hidden truth about Hemingway's death, or to cast blame on any survivor, or to shed new light on the author's thoughts about suicide.

As we shall see, a subject's purposeful self-destruction creates both pitfalls and opportunities for the biographer. The main unavoidable trap is the biographer's involvement with the survivors, who often have an urgent emotional need to see the event in a way they can live with. The principal opportunity, which stems from suicide's symbolic power and is accompanied by pitfalls of its own, is the chance to create a narrative of exceptional coherence. Both the pitfalls and the opportunities appear even in the earliest journalistic accounts of "that July dawn."

Early Accounts

On July 3, 1961, the front page of the *New York Times* read "Hemingway Dead of Shotgun Wound; Wife Says He Was Cleaning Weapon." Already in this first announcement of the sad news we get a hint of the conflicts that bedevil suicide survivors and those who depend on them for the "facts." Since there was no coroner's inquest, the *New York Times* pretended to accept what the victim's widow—Mary Welsh Hemingway—had to say, but the phrase "wife says" suggests that the newspaper was clearly skeptical about her version of events. As for the other survivors, whatever their actual views, they at first stood by Mary. Interviewed on her way to his funeral, Hemingway's sister Ursula declared that "Suicide was against all his convictions and principles. Anyone who had read his works should know that" ("Hemingway's Sister"). Other friends made similar remarks to the press (Bebout 18).

The public stance of Hemingway's survivors, in fact, has implications for anyone writing or reading about the life of a suicide. Given not only the taboo against suicide, but also its social, legal, and financial consequences, such denial or "dishonesty" was and is very common—a fact which partly accounts for the notorious unreliability of suicide statistics (Douglas 163–231; Kushner, *American Suicide* 66–72). Deliberate self-destruction is almost always a damaging blow to close relatives and friends, and in fact, suicide survivorship should be recognized as a specific clinical syndrome. In the field of suicidology, such people are commonly designated by the

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telling acronym "SOS"—survivors of suicide—or as "survivor-victims." In America, between 200,000 and 300,000 join their ranks annually, and their total number is in the millions.

Such survivors often undergo an unusually prolonged and difficult mourning. They may feel excessive guilt and the need to deny it. They may regard the suicide as a murderous act directed at themselves. They may experience real or imagined stigmatizing by others. They may fear for their own stability, and wonder, if they are blood-relatives of the deceased, whether suicide "runs in the family." They may produce self-justifying explanations of the dead person's motives. They may engage in mutual recriminations with other members of the circle.[4] Nevertheless, these survivors of suicide will be the primary sources for any biographer wanting to write the life of the deceased, and the survivors may also write memoirs of their own. If, as Victoria Glendinning suggests, a subject's survivors are "at once the most valuable sources of information and the most unreliable" (57), this is doubly true if the subject died by suicide.

The early journalistic accounts also seek to interpret Hemingway's self-destruction in ways that capitalize on the powerful symbolism of the act—readings complicated in this case by a reluctance to state that the self-destruction was intentional. Unlike, say, death by cancer, suicide allows for especially significant linkings of the death to the life. Not simply an act of self-destruction, suicide is also an act of communication, an attempt at self-fashioning and self-dramatization, and an expression of a need for control.[5] Suicide, in short, has something in common with *auto*biography.

In a 1908 letter to Henry James, Henry Adams noted this resemblance when he described his *Education*, then in manuscript form, as "a mere shield of protection in the grave. I advise you to take your own life in the same way, in order to prevent biographers from taking it in theirs" (512–13). Though usually cited because of its half-joking metaphors—biographers are murderers who can be forestalled by autobiographical "suicide"—this passage also implies that, like autobiography, suicide is an attempt to shape one's life story.[6] The editors of *Life* magazine offered this reading less than two weeks after Hemingway's death. Strongly implying that the death was most certainly a suicide, *Life* presented what might simply be called the "story" explanation:

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> The writer, as always in control of his material ("What I write must be good," he said, "or I destroy it"), had written the deliberate last chapter by shooting himself with a double-barreled shotgun. ("Hemingway: Driving Force" 60)

This reading of the suicide remains popular: Hemingway is portrayed as so dedicated to his story-telling art, and so personally identified with his own "code-heroes," that he cancelled his own life story when his control over it began to slip. So Jackson Benson speaks of Hemingway's "biographical fallacy" (358), Morley Callaghan sees him "seeking the right end to his story, his life" (qtd. in Brian 299), and Leicester Hemingway points to "the explosive period" that ended his brother's life (283). Even those who object to this story reproduce it. As Kurt Vonnegut puts it, "Hemingway made a serious mistake thinking that his life had to be a good story and that, when it ceased to be one, it was over" (25). Though this "story" explanation may seem a little too pat, it is nevertheless consistent with clinical notions of suicide as a communicative act.

Because Hemingway's life—or, more properly, the self-created macho legend of that life—had merged in the public mind with his literary work,[7] his bloody end prompted journalists to link his death to both his life and his fiction. For example, the July 3 issue of the *New York Times* ran a full-page obituary under the heading "Hemingway's Prize-Winning Works Reflected Preoccupation With Life and Death" (6). The editorial in the same issue began with the line, "Ernest Hemingway had loved firearms all his adult life and it may have been fitting that he received his death from one yesterday morning at Ketchum, Idaho" (14). *Life* magazine stressed this "fittingness" even more strongly, assuming that the death was a suicide and saying nothing about Mary's claim to the contrary:

> But accidents that he could make wry jokes about or put down in fiction were one thing. The uncertainty, pain and corrosive indignity of ill health were quite another. "Dying is only bad when it takes a long time and hurts so much that it humiliates you," he wrote in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. The final irony of his bruised and bunged-up life was that his death, like that of his ailing father in 1928, seemed no accident. ("Hemingway: Driving Force" 64)

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These early journalistic accounts, in short, display patterns and employ devices which later biographers would rely on as well: uncertainty about how to present Mary's falsehood, references to the suicide of Hemingway's father, Dr. Clarence Hemingway, and especially, explanations of the death that connect it to Papa's manly persona and to his art.

Survivors as Biographers / Biographers as Survivors

When survivors of a non-famous suicide write memoirs, they generally do so to regain control of their *own* stories and to resume their own lives. The writing has a directly therapeutic purpose for the writer and often an explicitly didactic intention. Probing the suicides of their children, their parents, or their spouses, these writers distribute blame and forgiveness while extending to the reader the promise of insight into an inadequately recognized social problem. Such narratives come into being *only* because the deaths they describe were suicides.[8] Hemingway, however, was so famous an author that most of the relatives and friends who composed memoirs after his death would probably have done so even if he had not died by his own hand. What they ultimately did write, however, was necessarily affected by the manner of his death. In addition, their feelings of denial, guilt, reproach, and self-exoneration, which often affect suicide survivors, were exacerbated for Hemingway's survivors by their awareness of the intense public scrutiny.

During his lifetime, the author successfully stymied the writing of any full-scale professional biography. As he wrote to Charles Fenton in 1952, "The writing published in books is what I stand on and I would like people to leave my private life the hell alone" (*Selected Letters* 765). After the suicide, family members, including his wife Mary and son Jack, repeated that wish (Mary Hemingway, "My Husband " 146; Jack Hemingway 322). Nevertheless, Hemingway's death opened the floodgates. Memoirs, biographies, and selected letters appeared, and the growing quantity provoked further biographical investigation. Various biographers aligned themselves with various survivors:[9] in time the feuds and disputes among these clusters became themselves worthy of attention.[10]

Hemingway's fame as a culture hero actually granted a kind of "distant survivor" status upon many outside his immediate

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circle who had been touched by his life and work. This was particularly true of survivors of *other* suicides. The report of Hemingway's suicide, accompanied by the news that he was himself a suicide survivor, provided additional evidence for the threatening belief that suicide is genetically transmitted. Poet John Berryman, who survived his father's suicide and eventually committed suicide himself, reacted to the news of Hemingway's death by writing "Save us from shotguns & fathers' suicides" ("Dream Song 34"; see also "Dream Song 235"). Novelist Walker Percy, whose grandfather and father both committed suicide-by-shotgun (Wyatt-Brown 249, 255), also wrestled with suicidal thoughts and alluded to Hemingway's life and work and death in at least five of his novels (Allen).[11]

The chief survivor of Hemingway's death, of course, was his wife Mary, and the tangle of emotions which accompany bereavement by suicide frequently appears in the statements and writings by and about her. As Hemingway's widow, literary executrix, and sole owner of all his literary property, she wielded considerable control over would-be biographers. It was she who authorized Carlos Baker's biography (1969) and who finally permitted him to publish (contrary to Hemingway's own expressed wishes) an edition of selected letters (1979). Most important for our purposes, all depictions of Hemingway's death necessarily depend on the account she gave. She last saw him alive. She found the body. Even the most recent biographies still repeat, with various flourishes, most of the "facts" she supplied: the touching moment, for instance, when Ernest and Mary sing a few bars of an Italian folksong before retiring on their last night together.[12]

And yet her initial claim that Hemingway's death had been an accident put journalists and biographers in the awkward position of repeating most of the "facts" of her account while remaining skeptical or flatly denying the one "fact" that seemed the most important of all. Though early memoirists, like Ernest's brother Leicester, and early biographers, like Machlin and Aronowitz and Hamill, rendered a verdict of suicide, Mary stuck to her story.[13] Things changed, however, in 1966, when A. E. Hotchner, a friend of Hemingway during the last fourteen years of his life, tried to publish *Papa Hemingway: A Personal Memoir*. Hotchner revealed details of the final years which made the verdict of suicide even more irrefutable. Claiming that the

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book was sensationalistic, inaccurate, and a violation of Hemingway's privacy, Mary unsuccessfully sued to prevent its publication. Though Philip Young's "On Dismembering Hemingway" does lodge serious charges against Hotchner's book, Jack Hemingway, in his 1986 memoir, defends Hotchner's portrait and declares that the real reason for Mary's attacks was that "he was infringing on what she considered her own personal territory, one on which she intended to write, herself" (321). In any case, during a March 1966 interview with Oriana Fallaci, Mary publicly acknowledged the fact of the suicide, declaring that her earlier refusal to admit the truth "had something to do with self-defense" (Mary Hemingway, "My Husband Hemingway" 145).[14] Ten years later, in her memoir *How It Was*, she repeated the point with deceptive simplicity: "Not consciously lying, I told the press that the shooting had been accidental. It was months before I could face the reality" (580).

This admission notwithstanding, Mary's reliability as a witness had been permanently damaged. Like her other actions before and after the suicide, her misrepresentation to the press came under the scrutiny of family members and numerous biographers. The responses have been mixed. Only one year after the death, Milt Machlin presented her lie in the best light: "Miss Mary never lost belief in the man she had stood by for so long. She told the newspapers 'in some incredible way it was an accident'" (222). Hotchner is also sympathetic, declaring that he "could not fault Mary for covering up" (303). But the fact of the cover-up naturally fed the suspicions that commonly fall upon the surviving spouse of a suicide. Of course, she had not murdered her husband outright, but perhaps—as Hemingway had said about his own mother's role in his father's death—she had "forced [him] to suicide" (*Selected Letters* 670).

Critics such as Jeffrey Meyers argue that Mary certainly knew she was living with a suicidal man and that she had not taken every possible precaution to keep Hemingway from killing himself. For instance, after the death, she explained that she did not hide the keys to the storeroom where the guns were kept because "no one had a right to deny a man access to his possessions" (*How It Was* 578). Meyers claims to see through this feeble explanation: "Though the exact meaning of this statement is unclear, Mary may have meant that Hemingway had a right to kill himself if he wished." In fact, Hemingway

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"may" have acted out of fear that Mary was planning to have him committed: "He may have felt that he had no choice but to kill himself or be certified; he may have taken revenge and punished Mary for giving him the freedom to make this terrible choice" (*Hemingway* 560).[15]

In his own 1961 statement to the press, Hemingway's son Jack offers a different explanation. Though he called it a "mistake" to say that Ernest had been cleaning the shotgun, just what he had been doing was unclear: "Papa was in *very* bad shape. So, there *is* a question of doubt, no matter what anybody may feel. There *is* doubt" (qtd. in Aronowitz and Hamill 221). Twenty-five years later, though, Jack suggested in his own memoir that his father's suicide might have been meant as a slap at Mary:

> Mary . . . continued to be adamant in her insistence to the press that Papa had shot himself accidentally. I suppose the possibility that someone might conclude that Papa had willingly left a life in which she played so large a part was anathema to her. (297)

Jack airs many grievances against his father's fourth wife (283, 285, 299), the most important being her failure to "level" with him about the seriousness of Hemingway's condition. She got Jack to go along with taking Ernest to the Mayo Clinic because

> taking him to some place like the Menninger Clinic, which specialized in psychiatric disorders, would tarnish his image if it ever came out publicly. She did not tell us that he had already been to Mayo and had already attempted to kill himself, but only that suicide appeared to be a risk. (295)

After a suicide, survivors (and biographers) commonly assign blame. By most accounts (Hotchner 291; Kert 502; Gregory Hemingway 114), when Dr. Rome at the Mayo Clinic was preparing to release Hemingway as "cured," Mary did try to have him transferred to a psychiatric clinic like the Menninger Clinic or the Institute for Living in Connecticut. Jeffrey Meyers takes both sides: in his biography, he argues that Mary sought the best psychiatric help, but in an interview with Denis Brian, he repeats the accusation that Mary ignored good medical advice in order to avoid bad publicity (Brian 259). Mary herself claimed that Hemingway "refused to go to the Menninger

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hospital" because he would not admit that he had mental problems (*How It Was* 575–6)—a view of Hemingway confirmed by his son Gregory (115).

For all of Jack's anger at Mary's failure to keep him truthfully informed, he also knew that he had not, as she had, been forced to deal with Hemingway's decline.[16] Reflecting on his 1955 visit to his father in Cuba, Jack writes:

> I never had another chance to be that close to him again. Much later, I wondered if, during that time, he had already foreseen the onset of his ruin. The signs were there for others to see, but I must confess I hadn't the wit to see it for myself. Either that, or I didn't want to. (288)

Of course, this post-mortem could be expanded almost endlessly. The point, however, has not been to establish responsibility for what was or was not done for Hemingway, but to demonstrate how memoirs and biographies of a suicide bear the characteristic marks of denial, speculation, accusation, and confession.

Narrative Strategies

Though it may cause pain for survivor-memoirists and even for professional biographers, generally speaking a subject's suicide makes a good story. Whenever an important writer dies by suicide, biographers will predictably employ certain narrative strategies to recount the life. The technique that almost defines the genre is to use the subject's dramatic end as a framing device for the tale. A second strategy is to point to events in the life which can be read as prophetic of the end: depression, alcoholism, illness, or a family history of self-destruction. A third procedure is to search the subject's published and unpublished writings for suicidal ideation, foretellings of the doomed end. A fourth approach is to diagnose the subject's suicide as caused by a specific illness, and then to link that illness to the subject's literary creativity. And finally, biographers can present—and often quite freely, since suicides rarely have eye-witnesses—the long-awaited death scene itself. As the following discussion will show, all of these strategies can be seen in Hemingway biographies.

Suicide as Frame. Narratives by suicide-survivors typically begin by announcing and usually describing another's self-

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chosen death, then either look back to find causes or forward to record the aftermath. In the first memoir by a Hemingway survivor, Ernest's brother Leicester begins his prologue with a reference to the suicide on "that last July 2." Leicester notes that "there was no one to witness the exact manner of his death," and he agrees at first that "It may indeed have been 'in some way an incredible accident,' as his widow Mary told reporters after the news of Ernest's death was released" (14). By his book's conclusion, though, Leicester has dropped the skeptical tone and has left no doubt that the death was a suicide. Equally typical, the first sentence of the memoir by Hemingway's son Gregory provides a personal account of the aftermath: "I never got over a sense of responsibility for my father's death and the recollection of it sometimes made me act in strange ways" (1). Hotchner's *Papa Hemingway* (1966) sets up the flashback strategy with a one-sentence opening paragraph that concludes

> —on that July day, that man, the envy of other men, put a shotgun to his head and killed himself.
>
> How did this come to pass?
>
> Why? (ix)

Professional biographers often adopt these same frames used by the survivors. A schematic example is Philip Young's *Ernest Hemingway: A Reconsideration* (1966). In this revision of his penetrating and influential 1952 study *Ernest Hemingway,* Young added a foreword which begins with "July 2, 1961," the day "when the phone rang with the news of Hemingway's sudden departure" (1), and an afterword which cites the suicide in "Indian Camp" as an omen—"Thus Hemingway's life ended where his fiction had begun" (263).

A similar pattern appears in *Ernest Hemingway: The Life and Death of a Man,* by Alfred Aronowitz and Peter Hamill, a journalistic effort that appeared in the same year as Hemingway's death. As the book opens, Hamill hears the news while indulging in the masculine pastime of watching a Dodger game on television. Though the death was first reported as an accident, the truth was soon apparent: "Any of us who had been nurtured on Hemingway had known, of course, that he would never die in bed. And yet, initially, at least, the manner of his death seemed a betrayal" (7).

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Biographies written years later continue the pattern. In the foreword to his "authorized" biography of Hemingway, Carlos Baker declares: "*Il faut (d'abord) durer* became his watchword as well as the rule by which he lived until the concept of lasting gave way to an overriding conviction that it was time for him to die" (vii). At the beginning of his 1992 book, James Mellow imagines Hemingway, at the end of his life, entertaining the same thoughts that occur to Harry Walden, the dying writer in "The Snows of Kilimanjaro." Though Hemingway is "facing death" and reflecting back on his life, nothing is said about the suicide here—Mellow can assume the reader knows (3). As for Kenneth Lynn, his preface puts Hemingway's suicide at the center of an ongoing riddle: was it "an act of courage, given the irredeemable breakdown in his capacity to write," or "the ultimate proof that he had always lived a lie"? Lynn promises to search for "truths that might transcend the controversy" (10).

Foreshadowings in the Life. Following their own theories of suicide, biographers who employ foreshadowing pay special attention to early signals, such as childhood bereavements, youthful depressions, or a family history characterized by self-destructive behaviors, including especially suicide. Hemingway, of course, was nearly a textbook case. Dangerous behavior was the staple of his legend, and he had the scars to prove it. Especially after his suicide, his heavy consumption of alcohol and the large number of illnesses and serious injuries he had endured were often seen as signs of a death-wish, a "pursuit of death."[17]

Because Dr. Clarence Hemingway fatally shot himself on December 6, 1928, making his son Ernest forever a "survivor of suicide," any chronologically organized biography must deal with suicide at an early point—and once raised, it unavoidably foreshadows the biography's, and the life's, conclusion. After an introductory sketch of Hemingway, for instance, Aronowitz and Hamill describe Clarence's suicide at the start of their second chapter—a poisonous seed that will come to fruition at the book's end. Ernest's brother Leicester remembers their father as being "dazed and bewildered," on the day of his death, "possibly by a lack of insulin, beyond any close touch with reality" (111).[18] Similarly, by depicting Ernest's suicide as "the final positive action of his life," Leicester provides an equally somatic, and therefore exculpatory, explanation: "Like a samurai

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who felt dishonored by the word or deed of another, Ernest felt his own body had betrayed him" (283). Later memoirs by Clarence's other surviving children also take for granted not only that Ernest's death was suicide, but that the reader already knows this; thus, that later, more famous death shadows their discussions of Clarence's suicide (e.g., Madelaine Hemingway Miller 115).

While Hemingway's siblings discuss their father's suicide in ways that anticipate Ernest's death, Jack Hemingway, the author's oldest son, offers an ironically understated insight into how Hemingway himself viewed Clarence's example. In a 1955 conversation, Jack admitted to his father that he sometimes wondered if life was worth living. Hemingway replied with a list of his own troubles, recalled Clarence's "mistake," and then

> elicited a promise from me I shall never forget. He said, "Schatz, the one thing you must promise me you will never do, and I will promise you the same, is that neither one of us will ever shoot himself, like Grandfather. Promise me and then I'll promise you."
>
> So I promised. And then he promised. (284-5)

If a father's suicide is a statistically significant predictor that a man will die in the same manner, an earlier failed attempt by that doomed son is an even more ominous signal. Mary Hemingway's 1976 memoir contains a story that has been repeated in every subsequent biography. On April 21, 1961, she came downstairs to find her husband "still in his plaid Italian bathrobe, standing in the front vestibule of the sitting room, one of his favorite shotguns in his hand and two shells standing upright on the window sill in front of him" (573). Though Mary does not say so, Hemingway's actual shotgun suicide, less than three months later, occurred in this very spot, while he was wearing the same bathrobe. Waiting for Dr. George Saviers to arrive on that April day, she knew full well that suicidal violence could turn outward as well as inward:

> I sat on a small sofa nearby thinking it would be useless, my trying to take the gun away from him, thinking that he could blast my head off at this short distance, about four feet, and all the while talking quietly. "Honey, you wouldn't do anything harmful to me as well as you." (573)

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Given what has already been said about Mary, her further comment on this episode is especially intriguing: "Years later, reconsidering, I wondered if we had not been more cruel than kind in preventing his suicide then and there" (574). Though couched in terms of kindness to her husband, these words supply a defense for Mary's "failure" to prevent Hemingway's suicide three months later. Letting him die was an act of kindness to them *both*—indeed, an act of self-preservation for her.

Foreshadowings in the Writing. Hemingway's suicide inevitably prompted many readers to delve into his fiction, searching for foreshadowing signals.[19] For journalists and critics, Philip Young had pointed the way. One of the few booklength studies of Hemingway extant at the time of the suicide, Young's 1952 work *Ernest Hemingway* had already drawn attention to many passages on dying and killing in Hemingway's writings. Young cites a line from *Death in the Afternoon* that would later appear in the *New York Times*: "But when a man is still in rebellion against death he has pleasure in taking to himself one of the Godlike attributes: that of giving it" (*Death* 233; Young 138). Young also quotes the well-known passage from *A Farewell to Arms* about the world killing first the courageous and eventually everyone else (*Farewell* 249; Young 65). Still another passage in Young (138), repeated many times, comes from Hemingway's brief tongue-in-cheek self-portrait published in 1936:

> Since he was a young boy he had cared greatly for fishing and shooting. If he had not spent so much time at them, at ski-ing, at the bull ring, and in a boat, he might have written much more. On the other hand, he might have shot himself. (Schreiber 57)

From the earliest days after Hemingway's suicide, this formula has been applied to explain his death as resulting from the failure of his writing powers. Unable to sublimate his aggression in prose, he supposedly turned it against himself.

Fictional passages which refer directly or indirectly to his father's suicide are of special interest. In the 1933 story "Fathers and Sons," Nick Adams explains why he cannot write about his father's death, and thus "get rid of it": "It was a good story but there were still too many people alive for him to write it" (*Complete Short Stories* 371). *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940), in which Robert Jordan muses about his father's cowardly suicide,

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has often been read as Hemingway's attempt to get clear of Clarence's act (Fleming 131; Meyers, *Hemingway* 213). But even with these passages, Hemingway felt he could have said more—and consciously refused to do so. Writing to Carlos Baker in 1951, Hemingway claimed that his father's suicide was "the best story I never wrote" (qtd. in Mellow 570). In 1952 he gave a more detailed explanation of this silence to Charles Fenton: "I had a wonderful novel to write about Oak Park and would never do it because I did not want to hurt liveing [sic] people. I did not think that a man should make money out of his father shooting himself nor out of his mother who drove him to it" (*Selected Letters* 764). While it is beyond the scope and intent of this article to discuss Hemingway himself as a suicide survivor, it should be noted that noble self-restraint does not fully explain this wonderful novel's failure to materialize.

Physiological Interpretation. Biographies of literary suicides also frequently explore the supposed link between illness and creativity. In recent years, literary biographies have become increasingly informed by biochemically-oriented understandings of depression and bipolar disorder. Anthony Storr notes that "Writers are so notoriously prone to recurrent depression and to manic-depressive illness that every aspiring literary biographer ought to know something about these conditions" (84). And Virginia Woolf authority Thomas Caramagno warns that "ignoring the effects of biology tempts biographers to read subjects' lives that end in suicide as miniature morality plays" ("Suicide" 63).

On the other hand, as Richard Ellmann noted over two decades ago, identifying some behavior as an effect of biology already entails some degree of literary license and psychological speculation.[20] And Edwin Shneidman, generally regarded as the founding father of suicidology, has more recently warned against "the enormous conceptual pressure on psychiatry and suicidology of multinational drug companies," whose chemical approach to suicide prevention, backed by slick advertising and large monies for research, has taken over almost every psychiatric training program in this country ("Some Controversies" 293–4).

The few examples of Hemingway biography that move toward somatic explanations still remain fairly nonspecific. Michael Reynolds describes Hemingway as "caught in a

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biological trap not entirely of his own making" (17). Equally general are Scott Donaldson's remarks about the author's "genetic inheritance" and Clarence's "bouts of depression" ("Hemingway and Suicide" 294). Kay Jamison devotes a few pages (228–30) to Hemingway as one more example of her general thesis, that there is "a compelling association" if not an "actual overlap" between the artistic and the manic-depressive temperaments (5). And most recently, Peter Hays has drawn upon the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (*DSM*) to speculate that in 1924 and 1925 Hemingway suffered from "clinical depression."[21]

But while advances in brain-chemistry are undoubtedly important for the psychiatric treatment of depression, it is hard to see what role they can play in the biographer's task: the constructing of a satisfying or at least meaningful story from the data left behind by an actual person. It may be that a suicidal end correlates positively with a low level of 5-hydroxyindoleacetic acid (5-HIAA) in a person's cerebrospinal fluid (Colt 203–5; Caramagno, "Suicide" 67), but what can such a fact add to the narrative of his or her life and ultimate suicide? Readers want to hear about recognizable human motives—a desire for honor or for revenge or for freedom from pain, a longing for reunion with a dead parent, a quest, even, for immortality. It thus remains to be seen whether biographers of suicided subjects will continue to write "miniature morality plays" or will be drawn to the consolations of chemistry.

The Death Scene. Regardless of how the life story is shaped or how the biographer explains the self-inflicted death, almost inevitably the biography of a suicide must contain a death scene. And yet, although suicide has self-dramatizing features, it is usually performed in complete privacy. No one actually saw Hemingway end his life. Consequently, whether close survivors or professional biographers, those telling the death must fall back on a variety of novelistic devices—most commonly, entering Hemingway's mind and telling his thoughts or describing in minute detail his preparations for death.

Published versions of that death exploit or intentionally understate suicide's great potential for drama. Though some biographers speak only of "a shotgun," or even, mistakenly, "a rifle," virtually all accounts are fascinated by The Gun. Even the earliest stories, which supposedly accepted the accidental

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death narrative, focused on, and even personified, the death weapon:

> Anxious to do some hunting, he got up early Sunday morning to clean the guns which had been his good companions on many a stalk across the mountain ridges. Somehow, his finger jarred the trigger. His head torn by a shotgun blast, Ernest Hemingway died. ("The Bell Tolls" 32)

Later, once the fact of the suicide was almost universally acknowledged, many biographers made a point of mentioning the origin and special properties of the gun itself. Although disagreeing on what kind of gun it was, biographers present it as if it were the enchanted weapon of a doomed warrior. In their accounts, Hemingway "for the last time fondled his silver-inlaid 12-gauge double-barrelled Richardson shotgun" (Leicester Hemingway 14), or perhaps it was "a 12 gauge Angelini and Bernardson made for him by W. Scott and Sons of London" (Machlin 222), or—according to later biographers—a Boss shotgun (Baker 563; Donaldson, *Force of Will* 303; Meyers, *Hemingway* 560). No pawnshop castoff, it had been purchased at Abercrombie & Fitch (Meyers, *Hemingway* 560, Lynn 592). It was "a beautiful object" which Hemingway had always treated "with the ceremonious reverence of a religious object" (Machlin 222) and "used so often it might have been a friend" (Mellow 604). Its sad task performed, the fatal device did not long survive its master but was instead reunited with the natural world. At Mary's request, it "was cut into pieces and buried somewhere else, in an unknown spot in the Idaho hills" (Ferrell 216).

Literary biographies often incorporate a subject's own writing into the final scene, thus granting the subject a few "last words." Drawing on *Death in the Afternoon*, Meaker speaks of "a wow at the end," while Mellow quotes "Indian Camp" to ask "And is dying hard, daddy?" Four biographers (Baker 552; Yalom & Yalom 494; Brian 252; Lynn 593) quote a 1918 letter: "And how much better to die in all the happy period of undisillusioned youth, to go out in a blaze of light, than to have your body worn out and old and illusions shattered" (*Selected Letters* 19). Hotchner concludes with the famous "double *dicho*": "Ernest had had it right: Man was not made for defeat. Man can be destroyed but not defeated" (304). Arguing that Hemingway's suicide, "rather than refuting his life and his works, proves them true," Robert Young cites the Stonewall Jackson

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line underlying *Across the River and Into the Trees*: "he put in the two shells and crossed 'over the river to rest in the shade of the trees'" (30).

Not stopping with direct quotation and literary allusion, many accounts attempt to imitate Hemingway's own prose style. Since Hemingway despised euphemism and himself described without flinching the deaths of animals and humans, it was only right that his own death be told realistically. Many biographers imitate his laconic, paratactic, "masculine" style, using simple subject-verb-object syntax to convey a series of small actions with a minimum of expressed emotion. The result, however, cannot be the truth of close observation—the sort of truth on which Hemingway prided himself—but only biographical imaginings embodied in tough prose.

Novelist Anthony Burgess, for instance, merges pieces of Hemingway's favorite Shakespearean passage, from *Henry IV, Part Two* (III.ii.234–8), with the famous *nada* prayer, and offers up the result in clipped syntax:

> On the morning of Sunday, 2 July 1961, he got up very early while Mary was still asleep, found the key to the storage room where the guns were, loaded a double-barrelled shotgun that he had used for shooting pigeons, and took it out to the front foyer of the house. . . . He that dies this year is quit for next. We owe God a death. In the story 'A Clean, Well-Lighted Place' there is the prayer: 'Our nada who art in nada, nada be thy name thy kingdom nada thy will be nada in nada as it is in nada.' He put the twin barrels to his forehead and fired. It woke the whole house up. (112)

A less allusive example of stylistic resemblance comes from Carlos Baker, who praises Hemingway for having dealt "a permanent blow against the affected, the namby-pamby, the pretentious, and the false" (x). Here, in full, is Baker's rendering of the death scene:

> Sunday morning dawned bright and cloudless. Ernest awoke early as always. He put on the red "Emperor's robe" and padded softly down the carpeted stairway. The early sunlight lay in pools on the living-room floor. He had noticed that the guns were locked up in the basement. But the keys, as he well knew, were on the window ledge above the kitchen sink. He tiptoed down the basement stairs and unlocked the storage room. It smelled dank as a grave. He chose a double-barreled Boss shotgun with a tight choke. He had used it for years of pigeon shooting. He took some shells from one

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of the boxes in the storage room, closed and locked the door, and climbed the basement stairs. If he saw the bright day outside, it did not deter him. He crossed the living room to the front foyer, a shrinelike entryway five feet by seven, with oak-paneled walls and a floor of linoleum tile. He had held for years to his maxim: "*il faut (d'abord) durer.*" Now it had been succeeded by another: "*il faut (après tout) mourir.*" The idea, if not the phrase, filled all his mind. He slipped in two shells, lowered the gun butt carefully to the floor, leaned forward, pressed the twin barrels against his forehead just above the eyebrows, and tripped both triggers. (563–4)

In writing these narratives, Burgess and Baker have assumed not only Hemingway's voice, but his point of view, his imagined sense of the scene. One useful approach to point of view here is through the well-known theory of suicide proposed by Karl Menninger—the same Menninger whose clinic Hemingway did not visit. Menninger holds that suicide results from a combination of three elemental motives: the wish to kill—to perform an angry, aggressive act (26–50); the wish to be killed—to submit to an angry, self-punitive act (50–71); and the wish to die (71–80). In Menninger's view, the first two are "demonstrated facts" while the third is "only a [Freudian] hypothesis" (79). Descriptions of the suicidal act, then, may stress the active "killer" side or the "victim" side, Hemingway "before" or Hemingway "after." The first gives us the familiar image of Hemingway the hunter, the man in control. It treats the suicide as What Hemingway Did, and it is what we find in Burgess and in Baker. Stressing the passive side leads to horrifying accounts of the damage done to Hemingway, the final Hemingway, the dead Hemingway—not What Hemingway Did, but What Hemingway Became.

Typically, these latter accounts tell us What Mary Saw. In fact, Mary herself was rather reticent about her experience, pointedly giving it only a single sentence in her 1976 memoir:

> "Good night, my kitten," he said. His voice was warm and friendly.
>
> The next morning the sounds of a couple of drawers banging shut awakened me and, dazed, I went downstairs, saw a crumpled heap of bathrobe and blood, the shotgun lying in the disintegrated flesh, in the front vestibule of the sitting room.
>
> I ran for George. . . . (*How It Was* 579)

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But from the very beginning, other biographers were willing to be far more graphic. According to Aronowitz and Hamill (1961), Mary heard the shot and "hurried" downstairs to find her husband "almost decapitated":

> Lying across his legs was his favorite twelve-gauge shotgun, one that was inlaid with silver and made especially for him. Both barrels had been fired. Of Hemingway's face, only his mouth, his chin, and part of his cheeks remained. (220)

Bernice Kert's 1983 book, devoted to Hemingway's wives and lovers, not surprisingly is most concerned with the survivor-victim's response. After she "rushed down the staircase," Mary encountered the following scene:

> In the front entryway the body of her husband lay, clad in the red "Emperor's" robe she had sewn for him long ago in Italy; a shotgun was between his legs. Blood and disintegrated flesh speckled the hallway ceiling. (503–4)

It is striking that while Hemingway's masculine journalist-admirers describe the shotgun as "across" his legs, Kert's more feminist account places it like a phallus "between" his legs.

A number of accounts stress in graphic detail the devastating results of Hemingway's act. "The explosion blew away his entire cranial vault," Kenneth Lynn wrote in 1987, "Whether he placed the gun barrels in his mouth or pressed them to his forehead is impossible to say" (592). In his 1985 biography, Jeffrey Meyers observes that the author did not kill himself in the basement, where the guns were stored, but went back upstairs to the foyer. "Knowing that Mary would find him there," Hemingway then "put the end of the barrel into his mouth, pulled the trigger and blew out his brains" (560). According to Meyers, "The carnage was much greater" than Mary's account suggests:

> Hemingway's chin, mouth, and lower cheeks were left, but the upper half of his head was blown away. Blood, bones, teeth, hair and flesh were blasted around the ceiling, walls, and floor of the room. Mary had to step over shattered parts of his head when she came down the stairs to find him. (561)

Graphic to the point of sensationalistic, these details support Meyers' thesis that Hemingway "had punished Mary by his suicide" (563).

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Not surprisingly, close survivors tend not to linger over the gory details. In *Papa: A Personal Memoir* (1976), Gregory Hemingway makes no attempt to describe his father's suicide, assuming instead that the reader already knows about the event. When describing the "barbaric" funeral of his mother Pauline, with its open casket, Gregory recalls a last falling out with his father. When Hemingway blamed Gregory for Pauline's unexpected death, the son left for seven years. Only a hint of the carnage enters Gregory's account: "I never saw my father again because of course the coffin was closed at *his* funeral" (8).

Of Time, Place, and Gender

Biographers discuss their subjects' suicides—if at all—in terms of the cultural assumptions of their own time and place and according to their own moral or interpretive intent.[22] Hemingway's identity as a famous white American male who died in 1961 naturally restricts generalizations about suicide in biography that are based solely on the examples of his biographies. While we believe that our discussion of Hemingway's survivors applies to nearly all suicide survivors, at least in the West, our analysis of how biographers tell their stories is limited by a number of additional considerations. Three will be mentioned briefly here.

Time. Biographies describing Hemingway's death first appeared in the early 1960s, when the taboo against suicide—and therefore against lifewriting about suicide—was starting to relax. One ground-breaking example was Lael Tucker Wertenbaker's *Death of a Man* (1957), which describes how the author assisted her husband Charles, who was suffering from intestinal cancer, to commit suicide.[23] Biographers also were beginning to condemn the reticence of their predecessors. In *The West-going Heart: A Life of Vachel Lindsay*, published in 1959, Eleanor Ruggles offers more details about the suicidal "death scene" and draws attention to Edgar Lee Masters' failure to report the full truth in his 1935 work *Vachel Lindsay: A Poet in America*.[24] In other words, Hemingway's 1961 suicide has from the start been subjected to more open discussion—and, some would say, more biographical intrusiveness—than would have been the case if he had died some decades earlier.

Place. Like the man himself, Hemingway's biographers have generally been American, and their books have naturally

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reflected distinctly American circumstances and cultural assumptions. What we have said about Hemingway biographies may have little bearing on, for example, *Japanese* biographies of the many suicided Japanese writers.[25] At the same time, though, English-language biographies of, for instance, Yukio Mishima, do often follow the "Hemingway model" closely, using devices such as the suicidal frame, the idea of suicide as art, and the deployment of suicidal passages from the writer's work.[26]

Gender. Time and place may restrict the relevance of Hemingway's case to other biographies of suicides, but gender may be the most significant limiting factor. Although exploring the effects of gender on the writing of such biographies would require at least another entire article, the main point can be stated briefly. In its motives, in its message, in the means employed, and in the way it is discussed, suicide is a gendered act.[27] On the face of it, the biography of a suicided male novelist, and especially one with a low opinion of most women writers and with a strongly masculine public image,[28] would seem to have very little to offer any discussion of biographies of suicided writers such as Virginia Woolf, Sylvia Plath, and Anne Sexton—though the patterns we have identified do appear strongly in biographies of, say, John Berryman (Haffenden, Mariani).

Nevertheless, some illuminating contrasts and some striking similarities do emerge. One such contrast is in how biographies employ the idea of "madness."[29] As Jane Marcus has noted, Woolf and Plath have "served as cult objects for the Dead Madwoman Poets' Society. (As I write, Anne Sexton has moved into the niche reserved for the white madwoman of choice today.)" (807). Marcus and many other scholars have noted, however, that often "madness and suicide are the central facts" (Marcus 818) in narratives of women's lives because "madness" is a gendered term frequently used to silence women or to devalue their experience.[30] And yet, despite his bouts of "black ass" (as he called his depressions), despite his history of "accidental" wounds and heavy drinking, Hemingway is never called "mad" by his biographers—in fact, some argue that Hemingway preferred to die rather than to accept that view of himself. Hemingway, in short, went down fighting—a reading reflecting his status (or self-presentation) as a powerful male.

Despite this important difference, many of the narrative strategies already mentioned—the use of the suicide to frame

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the story, the search for foreshadowings in the life and the writing, the appeal to physiology, and the depiction of the death scene—all can be found in the biographies of suicided women. Take, for instance, this framing opening line by Anne Stevenson: "On February 11, 1963, the American poet Sylvia Plath, living in London with her two small children, put an end to her life at the age of thirty. Her suicide gave rise to a vast popular mythology" (xi).[31] Nearly all biographers search for foreshadowings, noting that Plath and Sexton, in particular, wrote numerous poems about attempted suicide, suicide, and death; and Woolf also explored these topics in her fiction. "The ending of her life," observes James King, for example, "was very much in the manner of Septimus Smith in *Mrs. Dalloway*" (622). All three of these women have been diagnosed as suffering from some psychic or psychosomatic illness. And all three have had their death scenes constructed for them by biographers, though, to be sure, the scenes are relatively restrained—asphyxiation or drowning (preferred methods of women) being less violent than a shotgun blast.

Conclusion

The biographer of a suicided writer is always confronted with the question of how to deal with the subject's death. If the death is downplayed, then the narrative strategies we have discussed are not likely to be used. If the suicide is to be emphasized, as is almost inevitable when the death is already a large part of the subject's legend (e.g., Hemingway, Plath, Mishima), then these structural and rhetorical devices are almost sure to appear.

Literary biographies of suicides not surprisingly share many features with other literary biographies. The suicidal subject, however, demands greater focus on certain issues, which can at the same time constrain the biographer's approach and add coherence and closure to the narrative. The Western cultural taboo against suicide unavoidably influences the writing and interpretation of biography, but this taboo's effect will be different in different cases. Suicide can problematize (Hemingway), enhance (Plath), or even leave relatively unaffected (Woolf) a writer's reputation. The case of Hemingway biography may apply variously to literary biographies of other suicides, but there is no doubt that a

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person's self-chosen death engulfs the life with an air of mystery and paradox, sorrow and suffering, that affects both the design and texture of that life's written presentation.

NOTES

1. Though inexact, the common usage of the term "suicide" is the one we will adopt (Shneidman, *Definition*). This study does not treat biographies of people who died from "slow suicide," "indirect suicide," or "subintentioned death"—for example, deaths resulting from prolonged substance abuse or excessive risk-taking (Shneidman, *Deaths* 81–108; Menninger; Colt 209–72). Also excluded are biographies of those who voluntarily died to promote a religious or political cause and those who performed "rational suicide" to end a terminal illness (Colt 351–405; Battin and Mayo 117–82).
2. In a study which superficially resembles ours, suicidologist David Lester has examined thirty biographies of persons who committed suicide, thirteen of whom were writers. From a literary critical standpoint, though, his discussion is strangely naive. He treats the thirty biographies as purely *factual*, objective documents which can provide a test group for assessing theories of suicide causation for accuracy and comprehensiveness—his real interest.
3. Kawabata Yasunari, winner of the 1968 prize, killed himself in 1972.
4. The emotional syndrome accompanying suicide-survivorship was first discussed in the 1972 collection *Survivors of Suicide*, edited by Albert C. Cain. By 1985, there were a couple of hundred books and articles on the topic—see McIntosh's comprehensive bibliography and its update. For more recent discussions, see Dunne et al.; Colt (409–94); Wertheimer; and Alexander. Clinical articles on suicide survivorship appear regularly in such thanatological journals as *Omega*, *Death Studies*, and *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior.*
5. On suicide as self-dramatizing communication, see Stengel (74–80); Richman (138–49); and Richard K. Sanderson, "Suicide as Message." On suicide and the need for control, see, for example, Faber (47); Menninger (70–1); and Wahl (28). Wolfe has written a sophisticated book on suicide as text.
6. Resemblances between autobiography and suicide are also noted by Barthes (56); Mandel (187); and Wolfe (99).
7. On this merging, see Raeburn; Benson; and Donaldson, "Hemingway and Fame."
8. Concerning such narratives, see Richard K. Sanderson, "Relational Deaths."

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9. Their entanglements resemble those of Sylvia Plath's survivors and biographers. Plath biographies often begin with remarks about the Plath Estate, about Ted and Olwyn Hughes, and about obstacles the biographer encountered. See, for example, Rose (ix–xii and 65–113) and Wagner-Martin (13–14); and for discussions of these conflicts in relation to the biographical enterprise as a whole, see Hamilton (291–304) and Malcolm.
10. See Brian; Raeburn (167–200); and Meyers (*Spirit* 23–54).
11. For fuller discussions of reactions to Hemingway's death, see Raeburn (167–200); and Meyers, *Hemingway* (561–72).
12. See, for example, Mary Hemingway, *How It Was*; Machlin; Aronowitz and Hamill; Baker; Meyers, *Hemingway*; Lynn; and Mellow.
13. Although Meyers has denounced some of the early biographies as exploitative and "crassly commercial" (*Spirit* 226), they did correctly record the fact of Hemingway's suicide.
14. Hemingway's sister Madelaine ("Sunny") expressed a similar view. Her memoir tells how, at the time of the funeral, she too grasped at non-suicidal explanations—her brother had been sleepwalking or disoriented by his medication: "I believed what I wanted to believe. I had to. I needed to comfort myself" (Madelaine Hemingway Miller 142).
15. In an interview with Denis Brian, Meyers amplifies his animosity towards Mary (Brian 259).
16. Kert quotes Hemingway's son Patrick as making a similar confession—the family dumped the entire burden of caring for Ernest on Mary (502–3; see also Meyers, *Hemingway* 560).
17. Young's *Ernest Hemingway* (1952) focused on the wound Hemingway sustained in World War One and established an influential biographically based reading of his fiction. On Hemingway's risk-taking and alcohol consumption, see Donaldson, *By Force of Will* (263–8). For an instructive catalogue of the many injuries and illnesses he sustained over the years, see Meyers, *Hemingway* (573–5).
18. For Leicester's fictional account of the suicide, see Langenfeld.
19. See Allen; Fleming; Mottram; Webster; and Robert Young.
20. See Ellmann's discussion of asthma as metaphor and as medical fact in George Painter's biography of Proust (11–13).
21. On the other hand, Shneidman concludes that "We should substitute the OED (*Oxford English Dictionary*) for the DSM" in our discussions of suicide ("Some Controversies" 293).
22. Changing cultural attitudes about suicide not only may lead to, but also be an effect of, changing biographical stories. Early examples of this process are the semi-admiring stories that Livy tells of Lucretia, or that Plutarch tells of Cato—stories that St.

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Augustine turned into negative lessons about sin, and that Renaissance writers redeployed in semi-admiring ways.

23. By coincidence the Wertenbakers were friends and colleagues of Ernest and Mary when they were all in London during World War Two (Mary Hemingway, *How It Was*).

24. Compare, for example, Masters (360–62) and Ruggles (429–33). It should be noted that Masters's book was authorized by Lindsay's widow, who was still alive when it appeared.

25. Some commentators have argued that changing attitudes about suicide are part of Japan's ambivalent Westernization. In fact, suicides by Japanese writers have been seen as responses to that Westernization. Lifton et al, Iga, and Wolfe all present biographies of such writers—and Mishima in particular—as evidence within their bicultural analyses.

26. John Nathan begins with a framing announcement of the suicide (ix), and the first main section of the Henry Scott-Stokes biography is called "The Last Day." Many writers treat Mishima's public ritualized death as another instance of his art. Dan McAdams begins his discussion with the bloody description of *seppuku* from Mishima's famous short story "Patriotism." Robert Jay Lifton and his colleagues also begin their portrait with references to Mishima's writings. Even other novelists adopt this approach. "It was the artist in him, no doubt, that decided how to make the best use of death," writes Henry Miller (11), and Margaret Yourcenar concludes that "Mishima's carefully premeditated death is part of his work" (5).

27. See Canetto; Clément; Higonnet; Kushner, "Suicide" and *American Suicide* (95–111); and Loraux.

28. For Hemingway's sexist persona in relation to his times and his work, see Rena Sanderson.

29. The word and its synonyms appear frequently in the titles of Woolf and Plath biographies—see Panken; Caramagno, *Flight*; DeSalvo; Love; Trombley; Axelrod; Butscher; and Rose—and of course Diane Middlebrook's access to the records of Sexton's psychiatrist has been the source of much controversy.

30. Commenting on Quentin Bell's biography of Virginia Woolf, a number of critics have noted that the term "mad" is often used casually and irresponsibly (Trombley, esp. 1–11; and Poole 22–4).

31. Although Alvarez decries the "myth" of Plath as poet-sacrifice (4), his study *The Savage God*, which presents at length his personal memories of Plath, has surely contributed to it.

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Nation, Family, and Language in Victor Perera's *Rites* and Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior*

Steven V. Hunsaker

Central to both *Rites: A Guatemalan Boyhood* (1985) and *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood among Ghosts* (1975) is the fact that their writers are children of immigrants. Because these autobiographers write in a second language, language and the process of learning languages constitute significant portions of their narratives. All languages can be learned, but the fact that official languages like English and Spanish *must* be learned reminds us that for the immigrant and for the immigrant's child, the imagining of a national community inspires a tense conflict between linguistic, ethnic, and familial identities. As Paul John Eakin observes, "While any autobiography . . . is necessarily based on tacit assumptions about the relation between language and identity, the special circumstances of ethnic autobiography tend to make these assumptions explicit as felt experience" (117–18). Given the troubled use of nation by Perera and Kingston, the "felt experiences" of creating oneself and restricting others through language clearly play a central role in the process of imagining one's place in a national community.

This study examines the ways that migration complicates the imagining of the national community presented in these two autobiographical narratives. Of course, Benedict Anderson takes up migration as an issue in *Imagined Communities*, but only long enough to reinforce his thesis that national boundaries are permeable. Because he focuses on broad themes, Anderson develops a fruitful—and unfailingly hopeful—general theory of national identity, what one commentator has called an "almost uniformly positive view of nationalism" (Balakrishnan 63). And yet, for all the suggestive strength of the concept of the imagined community, Anderson's commentary seems oddly untroubled. His optimistic take on this issue is most evident in

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the chapter "Patriotism and Racism," where he describes the "selfless unisonance" created in the singing of national anthems. He says:

> such choruses are joinable in time. If I am a Lett, my daughter may be an Australian. The son of an Italian immigrant to New York will find ancestors in the Pilgrim Fathers. If nationalness has about it an aura of fatality, it is nonetheless a fatality embedded in *history*. Here San Martín's edict baptizing Quechua-speaking Indians as "Peruvians"—a movement that has affinities with religious conversion—is exemplary. For it shows that from the start the nation was conceived in language, not in blood, and that one could be "invited into" the imagined community. Thus today, even the most insular nations accept the principle of *naturalization* (wonderful word!), no matter how difficult in practice they may make it. (145)

By shifting the source of identity from genetics to the historical accident of language, Anderson argues that the "fatality" of one's nationality has everything to do with linguistic and social identity, and nothing whatsoever to do with a people's biological or "essential" nature. Despite our inherited identities, in short, we are not bound to remain Lett, Italian, or Quechua.

And yet, while naturalization does happen, moving from nation to nation and from language to language does not simply depend on being invited into a new linguistic community. Anderson ignores serious complicating factors. In Werner Sollors's terms, those new loyalties and affective ties felt by the Italian immigrant's son for the Pilgrim Fathers—ties based on consent—are a product of the newly acquired language and culture, but they come at a cost: potentially serious conflict with parents, the sources of traditional identity through descent. Anderson's advocacy of a nationalism based in love leads to overstatement. Though he is a prominent commentator on ethnically and nationally inspired violence, by emphasizing an inclusive nationalism he overlooks the potential for less blatant cultural violence, such as the compelled redefinition of Quechua-speaking persons as members of the new Peruvian nation. His desire, in short, to demonstrate the permeability and flexibility of national identity leads Anderson to foreground the possibility of being invited into an imagined community without fully acknowledging the price or coercive nature of that invitation.

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More recently Anderson has explored the difficulties following migration. Taking as his example a situation very much like that of Perera's and Kingston's parents, Anderson asks the reader to

> consider the well-known photograph of the lonely Peloponnesian *Gastarbeiter* sitting in his dingy room in, say, Frankfurt. The solitary decoration on his wall is a resplendent Lufthansa travel poster of the Parthenon, which invites him, in German, to take a "sun-drenched holiday" in Greece. He may well never have seen the Parthenon, but framed by Lufthansa the poster confirms for him and for any visitor a Greek identity that perhaps only Frankfurt has encouraged him to assume. At the same time, it reminds him that he is only a couple of air hours from Greece, and that if he saves enough Lufthansa will be glad to assist him to have a fortnight's "sunny holiday" in his *Heimat*. He knows too, most likely, that he will then return to exile in Frankfurt. Or is it that, in the longer run, he will find himself in brief annual exile in the Peloponnese? Or in both places? And what about his children? ("Exodus" 322)

The *Gastarbeiter* inhabits a space between communities. Stripped of ethnic authenticity or purity by a new language, new experiences, and new resources, he has not, however, assumed a German identity through the same process. Suspended between home and homeland, the migrant inhabits a syncretic identity, symbolized by the travel poster, which combines German text with images of Greece. But since syncretic identity, national or otherwise, implies mobility within rather than freedom from history, blood, language, and culture, the migrant and his child must somehow negotiate a peace between the demands of ethnicity and the possibilities for new national identities.

Much as might the children of Anderson's *Gastarbeiter*, the protagonists in *Rites* and *The Woman Warrior* must decide, among other things, to what extent they can imagine their own communities when commercial images such as Kung Fu movies, for Kingston, and hostile religious ideas, for Perera, depict a supposed national essence for them which would confine their identity to mere caricatures. Stereotyped ethnic images and the parental pressure to follow tradition both pose the question of who decides what it means to be Greek, German, Guatemalan, or Chinese, and whether one's home is the place of residence or of parental origin. It is, as Werner Sollors would

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put it, a question of descent or consent: what do the children of the *Gastarbeiter*, of Chinese immigrants in California, and Jewish immigrants in Guatemala owe to the biological legacy granted them by descent, and how freely may these children adopt new forms and modes of selfhood by consenting to identity through them?

This play between freedom and constraint in the formation of national identity parallels the give and take many contemporary theorists find inherent in the autobiographical project. Since neither memory nor meaning can precede language, language is at once the material and the means of autobiography. The conventions of such writing shape the "I" through patterns and expectations to create a "self" that is comprehensible and meaningful within a specific literary culture. As Sidonie Smith has stated

> because self-representation is discursively complex and ambiguous, a "radical disappropriation" of the actual life by the artifice of literature takes place at the scene of writing. The "I," something apparently familiar, becomes something other, foreign; and the drift of the disappropriation, the shape, that is, that the autobiographer's narrative and dramatic strategies take, reveals more about the autobiographer's present experience of "self" than about her past, although, of course, it tells us something about that as well. Fundamentally, it reveals the way the autobiographer situates herself and her story in relation to cultural ideologies and figures of selfhood. (47)

A more traditional perspective would suggest that the life must be the antecedent of that text which purports to tell its story. Smith reverses what we might call this "common sense" understanding of autobiography, arguing that the life narrative in a sense precedes the life, since only when the autobiographer tells herself the story of her life do past events take shape as a more or less meaningful sequence or progression.

Furthermore, the necessarily provisional "I" comes into being only when we tell the story of our "selves"—a concept of the self which G. Thomas Couser strikingly explains by way of a metaphor:

> We seem to have entered the age of the dot-matrix "I": that crucial personal pronoun, once impressed on the page by an integral piece of type, is now merely a particular configuration of the otherwise indistinguishable dots that serve to make up all the other characters. (10)

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Both Couser and Smith assume that the contingency and indeterminacy of the autobiographical subject make possible new patterns and forms of identity. As Smith notes, however, culturally based figures of selfhood restrict the range of those possibilities. And as part of the complex web of associations and allegiances composing selfhood, national identity is at once elastic and rigid in similar ways. I take exception to Anderson's depiction of the pliant boundaries of national identity, therefore, only in terms of degree. Borders can be crossed and legal naturalization does occur, but the children of migrants, such as Perera and Kingston, find themselves between communities, in a space that makes a syncretic identity—Perera's father says "heathen" and Kingston's mother "barbarian"—inevitable.

Though Anderson, Smith, and Couser do not claim that any given form of identity is more legitimate than another, the parents of Kingston and Perera are not so generous. For Perera's father and Kingston's mother, national and cultural identities cannot be exchanged or altered without significant loss. Descent, they feel, is the central element of identity, and a concern for ethnic continuity dominates their thinking. Removed from traditional Jewish or Chinese culture, their children are either "heathens" or "barbarians," forever different from their parents. The ease with which these children consent to new forms of identity makes life in the new land an even more culturally dangerous prospect for the parents. Since national identity, language, family, and the homeland are such serious matters, the children's preference for the place of residence over the place of parental origin creates a painful generational rift. In a passage as true for Perera as it is for Kingston, Sollors writes that "In American we may *feel* 'filiopietism,' but we pledge 'allegiance' to the country. To say it plainly, American identity is often imagined as volitional consent, as love and marriage, ethnicity as seemingly immutable ancestry and descent" (151).

When Kingston's and Perera's parents emigrate from China and Palestine, they do not intend to make themselves at home in their new land. These immigrants limit their efforts at acculturation to acquiring those skills necessary to succeed in business. In attempting to make themselves less culturally distinct, the children of these immigrants move away from the traditions and languages of their parents. In both cases, the sign of this rift is the English language. The English that Maxine

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Hong Kingston speaks, and the English text of *The Woman Warrior*, which represent her acceptance of and by the United States, also stand for her conflicts with the Chinese language and parental traditions. Since she finds the term "American" expansive enough to include her, however, Kingston eventually subsumes the contending forces of her American and Chinese identities within that broad rubric. The English that Victor Perera speaks, and the English text of *Rites*, also represent conflict between parent and child, but without ever striking the shaky truce between competing allegiances which Kingston achieves. Unable to imagine himself as either Guatemalan or Jewish in the tradition of his parents, Perera chooses the internationalism available through English. Whether signaling assimilation in the United States or its failure in Guatemala, English stands, therefore, as the sign of both national identity and its absence in *The Woman Warrior* and *Rites*.

* * * * *

If English is the sign of Perera's indefinite national identity, his double circumcision represents his parents' failed effort to establish an identity for him in terms of family and religion. Rather than bring the child into the Jewish community, the ritually incomplete first circumcision and the emotionally scarring second one distance Perera from that desired identity. *Rites* begins with this failed ritual:

> I was not quite six when I was circumcised for the second time because the first job, performed by a Gentile doctor, was pronounced unclean by our new rabbi. My mother tells me that a small flap of foreskin survived the first operation, so that I hung by this integument for six years between Baal and the Shield of David, a part heathen. The ceremonial tableau has lodged in my memory, held there in trust for my understanding to ripen and draw out its full significance. (3)

The account of the "full significance" of the second circumcision makes it clear that the botched rite includes a sense of self which hangs suspended between loyalties and identities, still part heathen and only part son of David. As the Rabbi Isaac Toledano, a man of "Gothic appearance," with a beaked nose from which "wiry hairs radiated like an insect's antennae," approaches the young Perera, "His nose is the last thing I

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remember as he leaned over me, whispering unintelligible blandishments in fifteenth-century Spanish. The rest was howls, astonishing pain, the bitter sinking knowledge that I would never again be whole" (4).

The failure of the circumcision to create a sense of wholeness prefigures Perera's later inabilities to imagine himself as a full member of either the Jewish community or the Guatemalan nation. Further, his feeling that this circumcision has left him less than whole also has consequences for his participation in his long and distinguished family heritage. "My parents were tradition-bound Spanish Jews, Sephardim," Perera writes. "They both descended from a line of respected rabbis," a line which ended with Perera's father (8). Though a merchant in Guatemala rather than a rabbi in Jerusalem, his father is nevertheless a dedicated Zionist of whom Perera proudly writes

> In Jerusalem, Father had been a Talmudic scholar and mathematics instructor at a girl's seminary. In Guatemala he began life as an itinerant peddler. (Why Guatemala? Father never explained this to my satisfaction.) Only recently have I come to appreciate the courage this required of him—an educated man of twenty-five, scion of respected rabbis and with only a few phrases of Quixotesque Ladino Spanish, reduced to peddling bolts of colored gingham to Indian laborers in a country so ignorant of his lineage it labeled him Turk and levied on his head double and triple the going rate in bribes, kickbacks, police taxes, and the other routine forms of graft.
>
> And yet he grew to love his work. He took pride in his hard-earned position as one of Guatemala's leading merchants and in his standing within the Jewish community as a loyal Zionist, a scholar, and a humanist. (9)

This achievement, however, aversely affects Perera's own ability to adopt the tradition of his ancestors. Although once a scholar, in Guatemala his father turns his "Talmudic ardor" to commerce rather than to scripture. Consequently what began as an expedient dedication to his trade becomes for the son an inevitable absence of training. Though a gentile circumcision makes him part heathen until age six, it is his father's overly zealous devotion to his business that leaves Perera ignorant of Hebrew:

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> Soon after my tenth birthday Rabbi Toledano warned Father that he had neglected my religious education, and said I was in danger of growing up a godless heathen. Alarmed, Father looked up from his ledgers and registers and saw that Rabbi Toledano was right. His first-born and only son, three short years from Bar Mitzvah, could not read a word of scripture. This was hardly my fault. Our lingual tender at home was a secular hash of native slang and Ladino Spanish: "Manga tu okra, ishto; 'scapa ya tus desmodres" (Eat your okra, animal; enough of your foolishness). Hebrew was for off-color jokes and adult secrets. (72–3)

Much as the father's Jewishness and medieval Spanish earned him the label "Turk," so too does the absence of Hebrew from the "secular hash" of languages that the young Perera speaks mark him within his family as a potential heathen. The initial difference between the father and his Guatemalan customers—language—also marks the difference between son and father.

But languages can be learned. Just as learning something besides an antiquated Spanish makes Perera's father's business success possible, so too does Perera's potential for learning Hebrew offer hope for escaping the fate of godless heathen. Learning a new language and identifying oneself through that language, however, are two different matters. Spanish may enable Quechua-speaking Indians to participate in a newly constituted Peru, but it is surely wrong to assume that such bilingualism erases former loyalties. Similarly, learning locally appropriate Spanish may expand Perera's father's business prospects without necessarily implying a loss of his Jewish identity. Ironically then, the possibility of learning languages both protects the father's retention of identity in a strange new land, and prevents Hebrew from actually influencing his son's identity, conditioned by that "secular hash" of languages. The son's Hebrew lessons produce only mimicry, not zeal:

> After a half-dozen lessons I succeeded in memorizing the blessing to the Torah, which ends "Baruch attah Adonai, noten hatorah" (Blessed art Thou, oh Lord, who giveth the Torah). On the following Sabbath Rabbi Toledano called me to the altar and I recited the blessing before and after, pretending to read a passage from the scroll, moving my lips to Rabbi Toledano's words like a ventriloquist's dummy. (73)

Though language has the potential to introduce the individual into new communities, Perera here reveals through his dull

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mimicry that language learning under compulsion need not do anything of the sort. Speaking Hebrew fluently was probably never really the goal for Perera or his father, but the boy's participation in the rite carries no sense of belonging to a religious, ethnic, or national community. For despite his training in Hebrew, and his constant exposure to the Spanish of his friends, teachers, and "chinas" [nannies], ultimately it is English which captures "the lazy and dyspeptic" boy's loyalty. Both his unimpressive control of Hebrew and his uninspired study of Spanish—"I was mediocre or worse"—stand in sharp contrast to his "enthusiasm" for English. This fascination reflects much more than an academic aptitude, or the boy's interest in American movies and American soldiers. In fact, Perera's interest in English parallels his parent's Zionism:

> English was far more than a second language. It was my Open Sesame to the Promised Land of Limitless Possibility, just as lavish handouts to the Jewish National Fund were my parents' passport to *their* Zion. (100)

By equating his own interest in English with his parents' Jewish Nationalism, and thus making a Zion and Torah of the United States, Perera intensifies his alienation from family and religion. Neither his parents' language nor their Zion are his. Nor does Perera share the language or the homeland of his Guatemalan peers, since his ambivalent feelings for Guatemala are sustained by his English-school education and his young adult years spent in the United States and Europe. Perera's inability to imagine Guatemala as his nation makes an uncle's announcement of his banishment almost funny: "I gradually lost contact with Uncle Mair, who wrote me in 1962 to say I had disgraced our religion and the family name by marrying a Hindu, and I was never again to set foot in Guatemala" (166).

Perera eventually ignores the ban and returns to the land of his birth, but depicts himself as an adult who feels no more at home "in this strange place, Guatemala," than he did as a child in kindergarten. "From my earliest consciousness I had known I was a foreigner," Perera writes of his first day at the English-American School, "I felt an alien among aliens" (24). He exposes the gaps among the Guatemalan, French, German, and Jewish children, showing how the Christian children, struggling to understand the categories their parents used and

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trying to find their place within them, confront the young Perera with such accusations as "My mother says you are a Jew," or "My mother says the Jews killed Christ" (24, 25).

The children's preoccupation with what they perceive as Perera's heretical difference culminates in a violent incident concerning the circumcision which began the narrative. "My mother says all Jews have tails and horns" says one of a gang of boys, while another accuses, "He killed Christ." When the gang attacks, Perera is helpless:

> I kicked and scratched and defended myself, but they were too many. When they had stripped off all my clothes—except my shoes and socks—they stepped back to look at me.
>
> "He lost his tail," Arturo said, almost in relief.
>
> "But he has a bald-headed pigeon," Gunter said. A giggle came out of his face that was unlike any sound I had ever heard from a boy, or anyone else.
>
> I turned toward the wall. My chest ached from the effort to hold back tears. . . .
>
> I cried at the top of my lungs until Miss Hale came. She cleared everyone from the patio and told me to get dressed. (28–30)

By stripping off Perera's clothes, the boys publicly expose a previously mysterious difference, thus demonstrating their ability as members of the majority group to make difference a source of shame and rejection. Though Perera is the victim in this scene, the boys' keen awareness of difference and nationality also explains why Coco, a French boy, is shouted down and called "Dirty Frenchy" when he tries to help Perera (29). In this case speaking the same language only makes it easier for the boys to taunt and humiliate Perera and Coco. It hardly constitutes a shared imagined Guatemalan community. Always alert to the various ways he is not Guatemalan, Perera uses this cruel scene to present himself as not just different from family and nation, but as prevented by his differences from ever achieving membership in those groups. There is clearly a great deal more to bridging national differences than learning to speak the language.

Perera's inability to be part of the nation also bars him from contributing to its welfare in another scene. As he marches with the Boy Scouts to present an image of order at a time of political turmoil, Perera simultaneously feels the pride of belonging to Guatemala and a sadness for those who do not:

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> I pitied [Coco] for missing this experience of patriotism—*real* patriotism. For the first time I felt at one with my country of birth, my homeland, Guatemala. Long live the Revolution! (153)

This surge of patriotism becomes pathetic farce, however, when the young Perera realizes that the crowds lining the streets are not cheering, but mocking him:

> We were in the marketplace, and the cheers from the crowds grew so loud I lost count and fell out of step. At the same time an irresistible curiosity overcame me. I turned my head slightly and strained my eyes to the right. Then I strained them to the left. They met with two solid walls of mocking faces and convulsed bodies. I looked again, in disbelief. There was no mistake. The cheers had turned to raucous jeers and hoots. The target of these jeers, and of dozens of pointing arms, was me. When I looked back I had fallen several paces behind the platoon. I realized all at once the spectacle I presented: knee-length trousers, spindly legs, the shortest in the squad by a head; and all of it lagging three yards behind in a now thoroughly demoralized rank of one. (153–4)

As the ironic phrase "rank of one" suggests, Perera is never anything other than out of place, uncomfortable, or actively persecuted. A strange, heretical Jew at school, an odd, unorthodox son at home, and a sad misfit when attempting to offer civic service, he was a boy for whom "the illusion of oneness had been shattered" (154).

A similarly excluding episode concludes Perera's narrative. Returning to Guatemala from the United States after the birth of a cousin's child, Perera throws a stag party for his former schoolmates. Presented as a gesture of reconciliation, this party allows Perera to present himself as the equal—if not the better—of his former tormentors. But his intended triumph is spoiled by the same Arturo who led the anti-Semitic attack on the young Perera. Now a prominent surgeon and government administrator, Arturo does not direct his anger against Jews, but against those that he considers unpatriotic. He begins by denouncing three foreign-trained doctors:

> "They are all three unpatriotic," Arturo began again, sitting down and crossing his thick legs after pouring himself another drink. "If you're educated and trained abroad, then you should stay abroad. Let the *gringos* profit from their skills,

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> meager as they are. I am a native Guatemalan, a *chapín* of part Indian ancestry, and I take special pride in my mixed blood. I was born here, trained and educated here, and I return the fruit of my education to my compatriots, who need it more than the *gringos*." (191–2)

Arturo then turns on the other guests. Becoming increasingly vile, he is finally knocked to the ground by an insulted guest. Bloodied and kneeling in his vomit, he nevertheless continues to threaten the others: "Because I have Indian blood in my veins you think that makes you better than me? You wait. I'll put you all in your places. I know your secrets, all of you. Not one of you can escape me" (193). When Perera bends down to clean up the vomit, he becomes a target, as Arturo's threat ends the narrative: "'And you, too.' The surgeon leveled a finger at me. 'You're an expatriate, and you've paid the price. But if you try to come back, I'll get you too'" (194).

Arturo's violent, slightly deranged, and excessive nationalism explains in part Perera's lack of national identity. Arturo's over-the-top patriotism is a dangerous and authoritarian jingoism preoccupied with authenticity and the right to claim national identity. For him, being Guatemalan, a "*chapín*," begins with birthplace and race, but is confirmed by civic duty. Arturo's insistence on his right not only to define such service, but also to condemn those who do not meet his standard reveals the self-serving nature of his patriotism. Furthermore, Arturo's bullying claim of collective national identity contrasts sharply with Perera's reluctance to assert membership in any group. For all the distastefulness of Arturo's patriotic fervor, Perera still experiences the loneliness of feeling that no group, nation, family, or language is truly his. In this way, extra-national loneliness stands beside the vulgarity of patriotism as *Rites* comes to a close. From beginning to end, Perera portrays himself as having left his family to become an outcast in the surrounding nation. The forces of ethnicity and religion still pull on him, as his parents seek to remind him of their orthodoxy and his heritage, but ultimately Perera portrays himself as feeling no more a part of his family or their people than he does of Guatemala.

*****

Although Maxine Hong Kingston, like Victor Perera, maps out a pattern of movement away from the family—and from her

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mother, Brave Orchid, in particular—Kingston is not rejected by the nation that surrounds her, though as a woman, her American identity comes at a peculiar price. Perera, however, never feels himself part of Guatemala, while it is eventually possible for Kingston to present herself as Chinese-American, or as an American who happens to be ethnically Chinese. Early in her narrative, Kingston says, "I could not figure out what was my village" (45). This lack of a specific group to ground her identity is compensated for, although never finally resolved, by her embrace of the English language, by her "American" successes, and by her acquired habits which make her "American-pretty" (12). Her early confusion about national identity stems from her mother's concerted efforts to overide the influence of her children's American birthplace, by suffusing them in the customs, beliefs, and stories of China. Only the place of parental origin can be her children's homeland, and when they show little interest in China, she responds by making China more and more present by "talking story," by relating seemingly illogical dreamlike tales:

> Not when we were afraid, but when we were wide awake and lucid, my mother funneled China into our ears: Kwangtun Province, New Society Village, the river Kwoo, which runs past the village. "Go the way we came so that you will be able to find our house. Don't forget. Just give your father's name, and any villager can point out our house." I am to return to China where I have never been. (76)

Despite the efforts of their parents, for Kingston and Perera, and even perhaps for the hypothetical child of Anderson's *Gastarbeiter*, ancestral homelands are as distant emotionally as they are physically. The parents, on the other hand, often seem never to have left Palestine or China. Just as Perera's parents feel emotionally compelled to return to Jerusalem to die, Kingston's parents almost deny the existence of their American residence: "Whenever my parents said 'home,' they suspended America" (99). For a child who knows no home but America, however, transplanted memories of China are less compelling than her own experiences, making "Chinese" by far the weaker modifier in the compound "Chinese-American."

Deciding that it is more advantageous to be American than Chinese, Kingston attempts to eliminate Chinese attributes by

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making herself "American-pretty" (12), "American-feminine" (47), and "American-normal" (87). The hyphens here not only stand for the possibility of piecing together an Americanized self, but also show that identity—American, Chinese, or any other—is a process, rather than a thing that one is born with or which one can choose and adopt once and for all. Though working toward different goals, the daughter's attempt to present herself in ways that are attractive to American boys, and the mother's efforts to funnel China into her children's heads, both acknowledge the powerful cultural and linguistic influences on the forming of national identity—a power hotly contested, since physical attractiveness has very real consequences for the young Kingston. As she notes with gently self-deprecating humor, "If I made myself American-pretty so that the five or six Chinese boys in the class fell in love with me, everyone else—the Caucasian, Negro, and Japanese boys—would too" (12). And yet, Americanized beauty is valued not so much for its potentially dazzling effects, but as an escape from the humiliating alternative. "And all the time I was having to turn myself American-feminine," Kingston notes, "or no dates" (47).

Beyond making herself attractive to American boys, Kingston struggles to Americanize herself by deliberately rejecting those attitudes and behavior of her mother which violate the standards of "normal" or unhyphenated Americans. Take, for example, the matter of speech:

> The immigrants I know have loud voices, unmodulated to American tones even after years away from the village where they called their friendships out across the fields. I have not been able to stop my mother's screams in public libraries or over telephones. Walking erect (knees straight, toes pointed forward, not pigeon-toed, which is Chinese-feminine) and speaking in an inaudible voice, I have tried to turn myself American-feminine. (11)

It is ironic that, as Sue Ann Johnston has noted, "the apparently more emancipated American culture . . . teaches Chinese-American females to subdue and modulate their voices" (141), though in Kingston's opinion, this strategy provides greater access to freedom and power. In fact, adopting American attitudes actually shouts more loudly at her mother than her

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now quiet voice, as an even greater source of conflict arises from Kingston's adoption of the goals and ideals valued by non-hyphenated Americans. For her mother, Americans are barbarians and "ghosts," and whatever her daughter might accomplish in that world is also downgraded by sexist Chinese attitudes. In response, Kingston writes "When I visit the family now, I wrap my American successes around me like a private shawl" (52). In sharp contrast to Victor Perera in Guatemala then, Maxine Hong Kingston finds that Americans, while they may not exactly embrace difference, do recognize her attempts to assimilate, and grant rewards which can counter her family's scorn. Being Americanized thus does not simply mean being attractive to American boys, but consciously assuming a national identity which holds out the possibility of being a woman who is a full citizen.

A good example of the implications of this process occurs when Kingston angrily asserts her own worth and intelligence when confronted with her family's disregard. To her mother, who calls America "a terrible ghost country, where a human being works her life away" (104), Kingston states her loyalty to a land that gives her a new sense of self through language:

> Do you know what the Teacher Ghosts say about me? They tell me I'm smart, and I can win scholarships. I can get into colleges. I've already applied. I'm smart. I can do all kinds of things. I know how to get A's, and they say I could be a scientist or a mathematician if I want. I can make a living and take care of myself. So you don't have to find me a keeper who's too dumb to know a bad bargain. I'm so smart, if they say write ten pages, I can write fifteen. I can do ghost things even better than ghosts can. (201)[1]

Even though her "American life has been such a disappointment" when compared to the mythic possibilities of the imagination (45), her A's and scholarships affirm the possibility of feminine autonomy, of the reality of feminine power and intelligence in American life. Success in an American or "ghost" context, she cries out, negates Chinese criticism. American straight A's put the lie to such Chinese proverbs as "Girls are maggots in the rice" (43).

Ultimately though, Kingston does not sustain a binary opposition between being American and Chinese, imagining herself instead in terms of multiple associations. Her achieved

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American identity does not exclude family or tradition, as is clear in the heterogeneous terms she uses to describe herself. English becomes the medium for creating an autobiographical subject embarrassed by her mother's social awkwardness, baffled by her power, and inspired by her toughness all at once, as Kingston becomes an avenging woman warrior who is also a submissive and rebellious daughter—an alien who is a participating citizen and yet the perpetual outsider. As David Leiwei Li observes, Kingston

> addresses neither the experience of being Chinese in America nor American in China but rather the experience of being a Chinese-American growing up in the United States. The book demands of the reader, as life demands of its heroine that he/she wade through strands of cultural forces, to understand what is being Chinese, what is being American, and what is being Chinese-American. (498)

Kingston, in other words, is American in ways that preserve family and collective identity in the predominantly individualist setting of the United States. Reworking traditional myths and creating her own to serve her needs as a woman of Chinese descent in the California of the 1950s and 1960s, Kingston "breaks away from roots only to return. Personal development is not growth toward autonomy, but reattachment to familial and cultural patterns, albeit in new and surprising ways" (Fong 17). And language reforges the link, since only by speaking and writing herself into myth through autobiography can she approach an identity through family.

This free rewriting of myth and legend to construct an independent, obedient, maternal, and militant self has angered many of Kingston's critics. Convinced apparently that an autobiography must not deviate from the faithful recording of the remembered life, some have castigated Kingston for the incorporation of myth and cultural exotica into her narrative—the imagined, obviously fictional, and strictly personal reshaping of traditional narrative in the "White Tigers" chapter, for instance. Such reshaping, so the argument goes, betrays a failure to understand China and Chinese culture, accompanied by an inappropriate obsession with details which the Western reader may find exotic, bizarre, or barbaric. Such attacks reveal that, as Deborah Woo has argued, "Ethnic minority writers are saddled with a burden that mainstream writers rarely confront,

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the burden of being viewed narrowly as spokespersons for the 'ethnic' experience" (173). In the case of Kingston, Woo explains

> Her artistry per se is not questioned so much as the way she has manipulated cultural myths for literary purposes. Her creativity in this regard is seen to threaten the foundations of Chinese American culture, destroying elements of a tradition which have served as an historical basis of identity. The outrage is not unlike that experienced by Moslems over the release of Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*, where the secular, literary world of free expression clashes head-on with a sacred, cultural world depending on the preservation of beliefs which sustain a way of being in the world. (175)[2]

Those who attack Kingston for refusing to conform to a uniform image of Chinese or Chinese-American experience fail to see that her text is free of such representative pretensions. Even when addressing Chinese-American readers directly, she emphasizes the peculiarities of experience rather than the generalities of a shared culture:

> Chinese-Americans, when you try to understand what things in you are Chinese, how do you separate what is peculiar to childhood, to poverty, insanities, one family, your mother who marked your growing with stories, from what is Chinese? What is Chinese tradition and what is the movies? (5–6)

Though stories of children born to immigrant Chinese parents in the United States must have a certain resonance for other children of immigrants, Kingston is clearly more concerned with what has made her unusual rather than representative. Kingston strongly identifies with that adulterous aunt whom she calls her "forerunner" (8). She wonders if she is her family's "crazy woman or crazy girl," or "idiot" (189), and speculates on the possibility that her parents' village "had become odd in its isolation" (187), pounding home the message that she and her narrative are to be read as decidedly ex-centric. As Frederick Buell has observed,

> Kingston explodes the anthropological project by revealing that she is attempting, really, to invent a usable past. . . . Desire, not an attempt to be transparent to an external reality, lies at the root of her constructions of Chinese culture and the past, and Kingston's desires—conflicted, overdetermined, often largely unconscious—are anything but clear. (182)

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The Woman Warrior's contentious reception by some Chinese-Americans demonstrates the volatile nature of the issues surrounding national identity. An autobiographer may create an identity through relationships of consent, but others may insist that relationships of descent invalidate any such creation.

In a manner similar to Perera's recollection of his circumcision, Kingston uses language to link herself to family and heritage through an act which involves cutting the body. Interestingly, whereas Perera's ritual circumcisions ultimately fail to mark the young boy as one of a group of believers, distinct from the world at large, Brave Orchid's action is ultimately a successful effort to open the world to the child. "She pushed my tongue up and sliced the frenum," Kingston recalls in a tentative passage,

> Or maybe she snipped it with a pair of nail scissors. I don't remember her doing it, only her telling me about it, but all during childhood I felt sorry for the baby whose mother waited with scissors or knife in hand for it to cry—and then, when its mouth was open like a baby bird's, cut. (163–4)

This gruesome act is supposed to bestow an increased ability to speak, as Kingston's mother explains:

> I cut it so that you would not be tongue-tied. Your tongue would be able to move in any language. You'll be able to speak languages that are completely different from one another. You'll be able to pronounce anything. Your frenum looked too tight to do those things, so I cut it. (164)

Despite these laudable intentions, the initial results are hardly impressive. Far from becoming fluent, Kingston suffers an inability to speak in any language. "When I first went to kindergarten and had to speak English for the first time, I became silent" she recalls (165), with the result that her first year in school is as painfully significant for her as it was for Perera. The young Perera's difference resulted from religion. For Kingston though, since she had not previously needed to speak English, entering school forces her to assume a new linguistic identity or to fail. Socialized in a largely Spanish environment, Perera did not need to make such a change. And yet, though Perera seems better equipped for entering the

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imagined community of Guatemala through language, it is Kingston whose difficulties in imagining herself as part of a nation whose language she cannot speak eventually give way to an embrace and acceptance by the land of her birth.

Such belonging comes slowly, however. Thoroughly socialized in a Chinese environment, only after years of silence in school does Kingston begin the transition from culturally Chinese child to Chinese-American woman. "Rather than a virtually autonomous maker of meaning from the chaos of the external world," Victoria Myers has observed, in *The Woman Warrior* "the autobiographer is plumped down in a world already permeated with meaning (or meanings) and must find what expressions count as" (114). In other words, before she can choose who she will be, Kingston has to learn the languages, structures, and traditions which predetermine how others will interpret her Chinese, American-Chinese, Chinese-American, or American identity.[3]

Here again, just how one spoke determined whether one was Chinese-American, rather than Chinese or American-Chinese:

> Normal Chinese women's voices are strong and bossy. We American-Chinese girls had to whisper to make ourselves American-feminine. Apparently we whispered even more softly than the Americans. Once a year the teachers referred my sister and me to speech therapy, but our voices would straighten out, unpredictably normal, for the therapists. Some of us gave up, shook our heads, and said nothing, not one word. Some of us could not even shake our heads. At times shaking my head no is more self-assertion than I can manage. We invented an American-feminine speaking personality, except for that one girl who could not speak up even in Chinese school. (172)

Through the American-feminine speaking personality and the replacement of her Chinese identity with a new Americanized sense of self, Kingston imagines and portrays herself as part of the imagined community of the United States. And yet, one of the most famous passages of *The Woman Warrior* reveals that speaking English well and imagining herself as an American girl is as much a source of power over others as it is a sign of inclusion. In fact, she exploits her status as an American girl to

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persecute the less Americanized. The girl silent "even in Chinese school" provokes Kingston into the "worst thing I had yet done to another person" (181). Enjoying the solitude of a playground on a late afternoon, when Kingston finds this girl in the lavatory she assaults her. First declaring that "I am going to make you talk, you sissy-girl" (175), and then continuing by pulling her hair, pinching her face, and screaming at her, Kingston tries unsuccessfully to force speech:

> Sounds did come out of her mouth, sobs, chokes, noises that were almost words. Snot ran out of her nose. She tried to wipe it on her hands, but there was too much of it. She used her sleeve. "You're disgusting," I told her. "Look at you, snot streaming down your nose, and you won't say a word to stop it. You're such a nothing." I moved behind her and pulled the hair growing out of her weak neck. I let go. I stood silent for a long time. Then I screamed, "Talk!" I would scare the words out of her. If she had had little bound feet, the toes twisted under the balls, I would have jumped up and landed on them—crunch!—stomped on them with my iron shoes. She cried hard, sobbing aloud. "Cry, 'Mama,'" I said. "Come on. Cry, 'Mama.' Say, 'Stop it.'" (178)

Here Kingston attacks her victim in ways that echo the violence committed against Perera. In that episode, the boys who humiliate Perera expose and mock the visible sign of his cultural and religious difference. All Guatemalans in the legal sense, the boys' attack is motivated by the desire to reveal the previously unseen difference of the circumcised Jew, that difference which makes him somehow "not Guatemalan." Similarly, though both Kingston and the silent girl are ethnic Chinese, the assault shows us Kingston as a Chinese-American girl attacking a Chinese girl. In two later episodes, Kingston further demonstrates her American identity, this time by espousing American ideals against Americans who have little interest in her opinions. "I once worked at an art supply house that sold paints to artists," Kingston notes: "'Order more of that nigger yellow, willya?' the boss told me. 'Bright, isn't it? Nigger yellow.' 'I don't like that word,' I had to say in my bad, small person's voice that makes no impact. The boss never deigned to answer" (48). Or in a similar confrontation:

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> I also worked at a land developers association. The building industry was planning a banquet for contractors, real estate dealers, and real estate editors. "Did you know the restaurant you chose for the banquet is being picketed by CORE and the NAACP?" I squeaked. "Of course I know." The boss laughed. "That's why I chose it." "I refuse to type these invitations," I whispered, voice unreliable. He leaned back in his leather chair, his bossy stomach opulent. He picked up his calendar and slowly circled a date. "You will be paid up to here," he said. "We'll mail you the check." (48–9)

Though in both cases the lack of a voice renders her protests irrelevant, Kingston clearly feels that she belongs to America, can defend its ideals, and can identify those whose behavior places them outside the "real" America. As a result, though greater cultural diversity may have facilitated Kingston's ability to speak as an American as opposed to Perera's ability to become Guatemalan, their autobiographies illustrate the same principle: Benedict Anderson's hopeful premise to the contrary, national identity's true sign is not competence in the appropriate language but the power to use that language to define the community by excluding others from it.

Though the power to limit the participation of others in the national community is certainly important, *The Woman Warrior* is not the story of Kingston's progression from a Chinese to an American identity, but rather toward that more complex, blended, and contradictory autobiographical self presented in the story that concludes the narrative. In this section, Kingston's ability to talk story just like Brave Orchid eases the tension between daughter and mother. The tale is presented, moreover, as the joint creation of the two women. "Here is a story my mother told me, not when I was young, but recently, when I told her I also talk story. The beginning is hers, the ending, mine" (206). The story's first part describes how Brave Orchid's family survived a bandits' attack because they were in the theater rather than at home. The second part is the story of Ts'ai Yen, a young girl and poet captured by barbarians and carried into savage lands. The stories are linked because Kingston suggests that this legendary poet's song may have been performed in the theater of the first story: "During her twelve-year stay with the barbarians," the poet "had two children. Her children did not speak Chinese. She spoke it to them when their father was

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out of the tent, but they imitated her with senseless singsong words and laughed" (208). Alone among the savages, Ts'ai Yen eventually learns to appreciate their songs—the only thing she takes back with her when she is ransomed. The following passage concludes the tale, and *The Woman Warrior* as well:

> After twelve years among the Southern Hsiung-nu, Ts'ai Yen was ransomed and married to Tung Ssu so that her father would have Han descendants. She brought her songs back from the savage lands, and one of the three that has been passed down to us is "Eighteen Stanzas for a Barbarian Reed Pipe," a song that Chinese sing to their own instruments. It translated well. (209)

Ts'ai Yen thus sings a barbarian song in Chinese, creating in the process surprising beauty through the fusion of cultures. By blending—and holding in sustained tension—Chinese culture, American culture, and the English language to create an identity based on a Chinese-American nationality, Maxine Hong Kingston accomplishes something very similar.

* * * * *

When Benedict Anderson asks what will become of the child of the Peloponnesian *Gastarbeiter,* he implies that whatever happens will happen to an isolated individual. Both *Rites* and *The Woman Warrior* suggest that we must think of this hypothetical child in terms of his or her parents and therefore as a child who possesses—by descent—inherited language and culture. Though both texts offer answers to Anderson's question, neither suggests that the immigrant's child will find an easy way to national identity. Perera reminds us of how reluctant certain cultural groups are to accommodate difference. Kingston makes it clear that even a limited sense of national belonging comes at a high price. No matter how eager children may be to consent to change, their fortunes are inseparable from the legacy of their parents. Though shared language may get an individual invited into an imagined community, language cannot guarantee that invitation, nor that it will ever come on noncoercive terms. Rather, this transnational child, a figure becoming more and more common, will more likely abandon the sense of national being to pursue instead that internationalism Perera finds in English. Ironically enough though, despite the increasing mobility of the global population and labor force,

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and the decreasing relevance of nations and borders in a planetary economy, strained relations between "immigrants" and "natives," as seen in *Rites* and *The Woman Warrior,* reveal the persistence of national identity on the level of the individual and the family.

NOTES

1. As David Leiwei Li explains, ghosts are above all people different from traditional Chinese in speech, appearance, and behavior:

> The usage of "ghost" for foreigners became a common practice in the late nineteenth century when Western imperial powers invaded the Chin Empire of China with guns and opium. For the first time in history the citizens of the "Central Kingdom" were decentered and they strove to retain their centrality by defining their oppressor as the other, the "ghost," the "Kuei," which takes on the meaning of "devil" and "demon." Such negative connotations associated in the English language with Satanic forces are more or less dropped as Kingston opts for the word "ghost" which accentuates the insubstantiality and neutrality of a specter. (508–9)

This spectral character in fact becomes another consequence of assimilation, as Kingston's parents' secrecy around their own children bears out: "They would not tell us children because we had been born among ghosts, were taught by ghosts, and were ourselves ghost-like. They called us a kind of ghost. Ghosts are noisy and full of air; they talk during meals. They talk about anything" (183–4).

2. Similarly Sau-Ling Cynthia Wong makes the following point about the ideological pressure on ethnic autobiographers:

> The history of the collectivity is ballast for the ethnic autobiographer's subjectivity; it is a yardstick against which the author can measure how representative or how idiosyncratic his or her life is, how worthy of preservation in writing. Should individual experience fail to be homologous to collective history, personal authority must yield to ideological imperatives, and the details of the narrative must be manipulated to present an improved picture. According to this logic, the ethnic woman autobiographer victimized by sexism must be ready to suppress potentially damaging (to the men, that is) material; to do less is to jeopardize the united front and prostitute one's integrity for the sake of white approval.

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> *Bios* is of little worth unless it is 'representative'—averaged out to become sociologically informative as well as edifying. (259)

3. Kingston uses these terms carefully:

> That we be called by our correct name is as important to Chinese Americans as it is to native Americans, blacks, and any American minority that needs to define itself on its own terms. . . . Apparently many Caucasians in America do not know that a person born in the USA is automatically American, no matter how he or she may look. Now we do call ourselves Chinese, and we call ourselves Chinamen, but when we say, "I'm Chinese," it is in the context of differentiating ourselves from Japanese, for example. When we say we are Chinese, it is short for Chinese-American or ethnic Chinese; the American is implicit." ("Cultural Mis-readings" 59–60)

And yet, despite the legal status of the newborn, *The Woman Warrior* demonstrates that becoming American is not automatic.

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Radio and Biography

David King Dunaway

Since the time of Plutarch and Thucydides, biographers and historians have searched for a wide audience for their work. In antiquity, this meant a reading or an adaptation as a play; today, with proliferating communication formats—Internet and CD-ROM, as well as radio, television, and film—biographers have more options. In an era when students and the general public receive more biographical information from such sources than in print, it is worthwhile to consider the advantages and pitfalls of broadcasting lives.

The most common variety now broadcast deals with our contemporaries and is based on current oral sources. Such nonfiction life narratives, researched primarily through interviews, have been the subject of essays suggesting that a biography written from oral sources has a different texture and quality than one derived primarily from written sources.[1]

This essay explores a few of the critical issues involved in broadcasting biography, such as the hard choices of diction and framing, and theoretical questions of authority and representation. I draw my illustrations from a forthcoming hour-long radio biography of Aldous Huxley, and my recent biographical radio series, *Writing the Southwest*, thirteen half-hour documentaries exploring the culture of the American Southwest, as recounted by its contemporary authors.[2] This series was heard on ninety public radio stations from 1995–96, with a potential audience of twenty million people.

Writing the Southwest began in 1986, when a group of New Mexican authors decided that their New York publishers were not wholly effective in reaching audiences for their regionally oriented books. These authors, including John Nichols, Rudolfo Anaya, Tony Hillerman, and myself, were convinced that there

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had to be other, more direct ways of finding readers in the American Southwest, which is generally written off by publishers as "poor book country."

Over the next few years, these independent-minded authors outfitted a bookmobile to travel to rural enclaves lacking bookstores or libraries; set up a booth at the New Mexico State Fair—down the street from the Angus cattle exhibit—in which they sold their books; and explored radio as a means of finding new readers.

This effort ended up as the series *Writing the Southwest*, a critical look at the life and letters of this fast-growing region. The pilot program, a profile of Stan Steiner, winner of the Golden Spurs from the Western Writers of America, was produced in 1986 by a biographer and English professor trained in radio during his graduate studies at Berkeley. Three state humanities councils—New Mexico, Colorado, and Arizona—provided the initial funding, and from 1992–1995, support came from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Despite its title, the series and its accompanying volume are as concerned with listening to the Southwest as with composing it. The use of radio to find new audiences for biography is not new, but its application to the literary history of the American Southwest is novel, and perhaps particularly appropriate. As Rudolfo Anaya, "the most widely-read Hispanic author in America today" according to the *New York Times Book Review*, told me: "it is not the exact texts of folklore, with their traditional tale types, that serve as a basis for my writing. More importantly, I've used the *technique* of the cuento. I am an oral story-teller, but now I do it on the printed page. I think if we were very wise we would use that same tradition in video cassettes and in movies and in radio."

One of the challenges for the literary historian or biographer representing the literature of the Southwest is how to present Indian and Hispanic oral traditions. Arnold Krupat has commented that there is no way to represent the "as-told-to" Native American biography, as performed orally, in any completely satisfactory way. That is, on a page. Yet as an oral (spoken)/aural (heard) medium, radio offers the public an effective way to appreciate oral traditions in their own right, as oral literature. The theoretical advantage of *Writing the Southwest* is its ability to offer this orally based literature and biography on its own terms. At this point, the tradition shifts from oral to

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aural. Complete with special effects and music, these documentaries offer an alternative to the fast-growing, books-on-tape format. In fact, these programs' greatest contribution could be in helping to develop a model for biography off the page.

At first glance, radio broadcasting and the Southwest's tradition of oral narratives seem made for each other. When broadcast, orally based biography provides an ear into our culture, one custom-built for radio and rich with the color and pacing of real speech. Broadcasting authors' oral interpretations of their work offers the authenticity of their own speech patterns and other nuances.

The Radiographic Imagination

At the heart of the aesthetic underlying the series lies what might be called the radiographic imagination: the way we understand the world from what we hear. Understanding what we hear is complicated, however, by the fact that hearing rarely occurs in isolation from what we sense in other formats—and particularly from what we see. Though we speak of watching television or films, in fact we hear them as thoroughly as we see them. Strip the sound from our favorite programs, and the images flashing across the screen seem pallid.

Radio is not the absence of images but the enhanced and exclusive use of sound. Radio's aurality, its quality of being heard, allows the world to be mentally pictured by sound. Faced with this less explicit form of biography than its sister visual forms, the mind populates it from our surrounding pool of friends and acquaintances. Our imagination first dials in the soundscape of a natural and human-built environment, only then noting the interviews, narration, music, and effects which the producer auditorially superimposes on that soundscape. In reacting to these elements, we think with our ears, responding in a way different in kind from the way we read biography or literature with our eyes.

Perhaps the principal difference between broadcasting and writing biography is the central role of oral performance. When relating the details of their lives, narrators proceed selectively, according to audience. And when a speaker's oral tradition guides how a life is told, radio may be the most appropriate medium for its presentation. As I recorded my documentary

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on the life and work of Navajo poet Luci Tapahonso, for instance, I learned that when Navajo introduce themselves, their family and clan membership is a crucial part. And yet, perhaps because such an introduction might involve chants or songs, published accounts of the poet routinely omit this information. Thus when the retelling of an individual life is embedded in that of a group or tribe, the case for aural publication, via radio, can be strong indeed.

One argument for broadcasting biography is that our quotations capture only words. Though we write with the eyes of a Henry James or Emile Zola, the shared excitement as our narrator warms to a story is scarcely caught by the words recorded. Any biographer can recount tales of how an unexpected burst of laughter illuminated a room or how a sudden, caught-up breath seemed to draw winter close on an otherwise sunny day. The familiar sounds of chatting over tea, the cheer which it brings as an interview opens—these atmosphere-setting sounds may be better presented on tape than on a page. So too are the nods and becks, the pauses and breaths, the shifting gait of a conversation—radio can reveal all these things, though they are not always evident in the highly compressed, manicured presentations we usually watch or hear.

For what happens in a life- or history-telling session is not exclusively expressed in words. As much as history-tellers, we have history-singers and history-speakers. The terminology used to refer to these tellers is inextricably combined with narration. Narrators, we call them. Storytellers. Sources. Griots. Though their performances may be analyzed with tools derived from applied linguistics, or from the few challenging ethnographers who have tried to adapt to the printed page the sociolinguistic transcription of pause behavior, inflection, and so on, we must remember that for researchers, history may be a set of facts, but for those doing the telling, it will always be a story.

Broadcast Biography

Today biographies are broadcast in a wide range of venues —from the mass market Hollywood film, or bio-pic in the jargon of feature filmmakers, to the ultra low-budget public/community radio profile of a local personality. Commercial bio-pics can usually be classed as oral biography of the tabloid variety,

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if only by virtue of their frequently tall tales and marginally libelous stories. The plots of televised or filmed biographies often seem to rehash work already in print, with key interviews reshot and roughly slotted into a melodramatic plot. The subjects of such profiles range from baseball players to newscasters, from presidents to movie stars to serial killers. The palette of such works is generally so restricted, however, as to create an almost inverse relationship between factuality in a broadcast biography and its cost of production. It sometimes seems that the more historically precise a documentary is, the smaller its viewership.

Furthermore, as stories, mass-market broadcast biographies contain an inherent tension between how much the audience wants to stay with the story and how much background material is required to present the times. Documentary producers work with archival footage of events or speeches; original interviews with the subject's associates, friends, and family; still photographs of the subject's childhood, locale, region, associates, and family; and music, archival and traditional, which underscores the images. Traditionally, this has been the limit of the documentary biography, though occasionally they are enlivened with readings from the works, letters, journals, and other writings of the subject.

Particularly in TV or film, modern documentary procedures add an additional feature, which raises audience appeal (and Nielsen ratings): staged reenactments of events, with sets and ambiance appropriate to the event's history. Though they jazz up a broadcast, such reenactments may raise problems of consistency in tone for the director and editor, not to mention the questions of authenticity raised in the minds of the audience. Consciously or not, audiences don't tend to give the same credence to first-person testimony recorded in our time as they do to scenes in which actors portray the events in a place and time only vaguely corresponding to what the interviews describe.

None of this is to suggest that either documentary or fictional treatments of lives on television or in film are necessarily more flawed than presentations in print or radio. Films such as Oliver Stone's work on the lives of recent American presidents can galvanize historical understanding and provoke debates on social policy. And yet, radio possesses inherent advantages over its sister visual media for communicating the findings,

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and the processes, of biography. Radio travels to where people are—in their back yards, kitchens, or cars. In remote rural areas, radio may still be the sole broadcast medium. Finally, unlike television or film, which require illustrations for every image, the grammar of radio encourages us to imagine history from our surroundings.

Radio then can provide the actual voices important to a life; and because radio production costs approximately a tenth of television or film, the medium is ideally suited to programs of less than national interest, which broadens the range of topics and the possible discourses of their presentation.

Critical Issues in Broadcasting Biography

Regardless of format, key issues which crop up in broadcasting biography are reductionism, cultural representation/appropriation, and the translation of literary and historical scholarship into mass-media discourse.

Reductionism is the fallacy of thinning out complex arguments and supporting data into a single strand of authoritative information. This problem also confronts those working in print, but since the compression of subject and time is the essence of broadcasting, it is more of a problem for broadcast biographers. It's hard enough to sift through twenty volumes on a subject and write fifty pages of closely documented commentary. Doing the same research to write four pages of script, devoid of footnotes and commentaries on sources, is not only harder, it also raises serious questions of how far the compression of knowledge can occur without compromising its character.

Problems of cultural representation and appropriation also haunt the broadcast biographer. Since biographers often enter worlds far separate from the ones into which they were born, in writing about their subjects they must identify and supply cultural characteristics to contextualize their subjects' lives.[3] As biographers thus struggle to overcome cultural stereotypes, they are forced to ask if they are representing or appropriating other cultures in their work.

In *Writing the Southwest*, Barbara Kingsolver, a best-selling author who takes as her subject the arrival of outside groups in the American Southwest, describes how she researched a Native American character for her novel *Animal Dreams:*

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> To write that pueblo scene, I read everything there was in the library about the pueblos. I visited the pueblos, watched the dances, and talked to those for whom the tradition was alive and meaningful. You can write a character from the outside or from the inside. I write about the deer dances because I have been there and observed them. I have no idea what that dancer felt like as she stood in the snow, barefoot.

Adopting Kingsolver's respectful attitude, biographers as well can learn from the sensitivities developed over centuries of fieldwork in such disciplines as ethnography, folklore, and linguistics. Oral biographers confront this problem because of the interactive nature of their process. Subjects talk back to us about questions we ask, and we encourage them to do so, providing the individual, and even the community, an avenue for shaping the final product.

Beyond reductionism and representation lies the question of biographical authority, or more specifically, whether the community in which this life originates considers the result a representation or an appropriation (Krupat xx). This is the sort of enormously complex question which media producers choose to neglect because of (or in the name of) external pressures and deadlines. Yet when broadcasting the life of an author such as Tony Hillerman—whose mystery stories are set on the Navajo reservation—I had to consider how his representations of Native American culture were received by that community. (Very well indeed, in his case.)

Of course, no matter how much material is gathered for a broadcast, the final decisions are often made in the editing room. Here hard choices are balanced: for example, how much time should be spent on such background matters as setting and historical context, and how much on the character of the subjects and their life stories. Such decisions inevitably respond to the multiple audiences of a media production: its funders, its listeners and viewers, the producer's peers, the project's potential for awards, and last, the anticipated response of the subject.

Biographer-producers also wrestle—though mostly in silence, since there is little guidance in our critical literature—with how scholarship is to be translated into the discourse of mass media. Sometimes this is a matter of diction—the word, image, or sound choices which compose the broadcast. Do we describe the impression a woman makes physically in terms of

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a "gendered body" or her "looks"? Should we refer to a person as "neurolinguistically challenged" or simply as "mute"? Often the more precise we are in our diction, the more we stop listeners or viewers as they puzzle over an unfamiliar (but precise) term. And because of the linear and unrepeatable flow of a broadcast, by the time they catch up, they'll have missed the next section of the program.

People tune in documentaries for different reasons than they watch Hollywood bio-pics. One offers illumination and understanding; the other, drama and thrills. The audience is markedly different. Public radio listeners have significantly more formal education and degrees, expect a broader lexicon, and have a higher tolerance for ambiguity. They may in fact already know about the complexities and controversies in a subject's life, from articles or books.

The commercial broadcast audience is more accustomed to generalities and demands a faster-paced presentation. Biographies for these audiences arrive in short sound bites, often imitating the skittish, episodic format of broadcast news. The style of the presentation is brief and jazzy, with music beds and slick transitions, framed by "cutaways" for commercials ("We'll be back with more—in a minute").

Broadcast audiences are self-selected and highly stratified. People who turn on the radio to listen to sports or to a documentary usually expect different benefits than people who turn to television. That audience turns to broadcasting for most every purpose but to think: to follow the latest fashions in clothes or courting; to absorb—rather than analyze—current events; and to be amused and stimulated in ways historians or biographers are sometimes loath to accommodate. That audience wants recreation; we want them to be inspired by the past and our subject's notable participation in it.

There are thus differences in discourse and audience expectation even within the genre of broadcast biography, as well as between broadcast and print media.[4] Because broadcast biographies generally aim for a larger audience than printed works, entertainment tends to take priority. The plot of a life, rather than its meaning or context, will prevail, just as personality and dramatic incidents will take precedence over historical background and controversies over sources.

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Broadcasting a biography differs dramatically from writing one. The two tasks are generally done by different people, with different training and backgrounds. The discourse is different, because one is read and one is heard, because reading is a profoundly different process from listening, and because the choices in editing for broadcast and for print are very different ones. Made very early in a project's life, these choices profoundly influence the eventual product.

Yet no Maginot Line separates these two endeavors. The more biographers come to understand the grammar of broadcasting, the more effective they will be in positioning their analysis of someone's life within those media. Deciding to tell the story of a life to a large audience via broadcast media does require that we sacrifice some of the exactness of our original intent. If, however, we see this not as a sacrifice but as an opportunity for presenting differently a person whose life and times matter a great deal to us, we will feel happier about the outcome. And if frustrated by our experiences in working with broadcasting, we can always write an article about it.

NOTES

1. For background on oral history as a biographical genre, see Mitchell; Dunaway, "Oral Biography"; and Schneider.
2. Cassette copies of the series are available to teachers, students, and libraries—at cost—from "Writing the Southwest," Department of English, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87104. The accompanying volume is available from Plume/Penguin (1995). Another radio biographical documentary by the author is "Aldous Huxley's Brave New Worlds," which will be distributed nationally in 1998.
3. For discussions on using culture studies in history and biography, see Steedman; and Faur and Moscovici.
4. For responses to published lives, see "The Afterlife of the Life History," the Winter 1992 special issue of the *Journal of Narrative and Life History* (Blackman).

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Reviews

Kathleen Ashley, Leigh Gilmore, Gerald Peters, eds. *Autobiography and Postmodernism.* Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1994. 318 pp. $50.00 hc, ISBN 0-87023-899-X; $16.95 pb, ISBN 0-87023-900-7.

While the question of agency has progressively emerged as the Achilles heel of postmodernism's radical decentering of the subject, autobiographical theories and practices have, surprisingly, come up with creative strategies and remedies. If groups and constituencies previously marginalized by dint of race, gender, ethnicity, or sexuality stand as potential beneficiaries of a general dissolution of the ego's sovereignty, it is only on condition that they accede to new sources of identity. The key to agency in the postmodern world is the production of cultural identities, and this impressive collection of essays sets out to demonstrate how autobiography has latterly proved to be a powerhouse in that very area of production.

For Leigh Gilmore, who introduces the volume, "the mark of autobiography . . . signifies agency in self-representation" (14). However, both in the introduction and in her own essay, "Policing Truth: Confession, Gender, and Autobiographical Authority," Gilmore argues emphatically that autobiography's potential as a source of agency is rooted not in its new-found generic respectability, but rather in its resistance to genre. Indeed, the point of fostering links between autobiography and postmodernism is to discourage the tendency to define and codify, on the grounds that such attempts misguidedly domesticate autobiography's "characteristic weirdness" (71). This is well said, but it points to some worrying ambiguities in Gilmore's argument. When she suggests that "the destablizations effected in the theory of genre" by several contributors "move us a long way toward reexamining autobiography as discourses of self and representation rather than as a genre defined in its post-Augustinian image" (10), and goes on to cite the discussion of Cindy Sherman's photographs, or the naming practices of Plains Indians, as instances of "something decidedly multiple and extra-textual," one may be disappointed to find that "characteristic weirdness" has been located not as a central feature of autobiography, but as a fringe benefit, something at its extremities. This critical move seems regrettable and unnecessary. It is one thing to lament a critical trend to smooth autobiography into coherence and canonicity. But it is another to imply that the texts of Augustine, Rousseau, Wordsworth, Newman, or Leiris do not in themselves manifest that "specific weirdness" Gilmore

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rightly cherishes. Surely they do, and postmodernism, as well as deriving from autobiography "a text and a discourse from which to theorize human agency" (8), can provide it with an alternative critical framework, attuned to its own potential hybridity, rooted in its mixing of fact and fantasy, reference and fictionality, the public and the private.

Autobiography tends to destabilize all these oppositions. Yet, clearly, autobiography's deconstructive bent, its capacity to offer itself as a space for multiple subject positions and plurality rather than fixed identity, has often been too much for the autobiographer. Very often in the history of self-representation, a particular ideology of selfhood has been imposed on the autobiographical work, limiting the dangerous freedom it allows. In her essay, Gilmore deploys Foucault's notions of policing and authority to indicate how the confessional status of autobiography has been used in this way. The confessional model tethers the autobiographical subject to externally sanctioned criteria of truth vested in the addressee. These criteria may shift historically, notably from a religious to a psychoanalytical paradigm, but the discursive structure, resting on what Gilmore calls autobiography's "authorization complex" remains the same (71). The structure constrains what can and what cannot be articulated within it. The experiences of female mystics, like Julian of Norwich, cannot be named within the authority-structure of confession, while Mary McCarthy's autobiography shows the persistence of a framework which, in effect, denies agency by placing the autobiographer in thrall to Another who embodies Truth.

For Gilmore, the tenacity of the confessional model is a sign of autobiography's flaw, the disposition to "an authorization complex" which finds its counterpart in the straightjacket of genre imposed by those other authorizers—the generic codifiers of autobiography. There are two problems with this diagnosis. First, it tends to exaggerate the grip of confession over autobiographical discourse, underestimating the other kinds of self/other dynamic at work in, say, Ruskin, Gide, or Woolf. Second, it represents autobiography criticism as far more monolithic than it is. It is hardly surprising that discussions of genre and canon-formation should have featured prominently in the work of those who have done pioneering work on autobiography. But, refreshingly, they have neither reached generic consensus nor agreed on the canon. Gilmore pinpoints the traditional humanism that underpins Stanley Weintraub's emphasis on "the Value of the Individual," but her remarks on Philippe Lejeune, making no reference to specific texts, are wide of the mark. If the act of reading is central to an important aspect of Lejeune's thought, this does not mean, as Gilmore seems to suggest, that the reader becomes a kind of detective. Moreover, the evolution of Lejeune's work on autobiography, over twenty-five years, has encompassed many of the points outlined by

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Gilmore, including the thoroughgoing critique of genre-centered definition recommended by Gilmore.

The main point, however, is that in its emergence as a key resource in the postmodern production of identities, autobiography draws on strengths which, whether they have been defused, squandered, or denied by practitioners and critics, have long been intrinsic to this mode, to what Gilmore calls its *bricolage*, "somewhere between reporting and fiction writing" (71). What it takes to demonstrate this, as Betty Bergland shows in "Postmodernism and the Autobiographical Subject," is a critical stance designed to tease out the processes in which the subject is enmeshed and engendered in a given autobiographical text, whatever its ostensible ideological complexion. This is all the more vital in the case of the three main areas in which autobiography and postmodern critique have formed an alliance, namely gender, sexuality, and ethnicity. At one level, autobiography can offer agency and empowerment to marginal groups and individuals by "giving them voice." Hence, a proliferation of "here I stand" autobiographies which draw sustenance from the genre's ideological power, and some texts such as Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* or Richard Rodriguez's *Hunger of Memory*, which take on a representative function with regard to Chinese-American and Chicano identity respectively. As Bergland shows, postmodernist theories of the subject can make short work of condemning such autobiography to the scrapheap of outdated illusions about selfhood. But an alternative move is to find ways of theorizing the particular status of the subject in this kind of autobiographical work, recognizing that what we are potentially dealing with is what Bergland calls a "multiply situated subject . . . socially and historically shaped" (134).

In her account of autobiographies by three ethnic women, Mary Antin, Anzia Yezierska, and Emma Goldmann, Bergland develops a form of chronotopic analysis derived from Bahktin and Benveniste which, by focusing on concrete location in space-time and within historical discourses, has the merit of relativizing narrative voice, locating the subject not as an individualized essence, but as formed by the interplay of discourses and the subject-positions they make available to a single agent. The comparison between Antin and Goldmann demonstrates that autobiography, while tending to "reproduce prevailing ideologies" (160), can nevertheless encompass oppositional or resistant subject-positions. However, to perceive this, readers must stop thinking in terms of the humanist/essentialist view of the self, and must recognize the ways in which "we are constituted in language and positioned differently there—depending on race, class, gender, or ethnicity" (161). The work of autobiography does not in itself conspire with any particular notion of the self, nor, in a specific text, is it wholly governed by the author's ideology.

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Autobiographical reading must recognize, and mobilize, the active forces—deriving from history, geography, ideology, and language—at work in the subject's negotiations with selfhood.

The reading of Mary Antin is complemented and amplified by Kirstin Wasson's detailed account of "Dialogical Boundaries of Self in *The Promised Land*," while Bergland's perspectives on ethnicity find many echoes in Michael M. J. Fischer's extremely wide-ranging treatment of the attractions of autobiography for anthropology. Writing as an ethnographer with a commitment to cross-cultural dialogue, Fischer makes a strong case for the value of autobiography based on three factors: the interplay between the individual and the social; the importance of life histories in identifying new (postmodern) identities at the intersection of races and ethnicities; and the accent on "the reflexivity of story-telling." While Fischer's overall valuation of autobiography is welcome and persuasive, his way of making his case often seems regressive in that it tends to make the individual autobiographical text a mere document, relegating it to the rather inert status it enjoyed in the past. Stressing ways in which ethnicity can be seen as a crucible for new, more pluralistic configurations of identity, Fischer sings the praises of autobiographers as "informants," and extols comparison as a fundamental heuristic strategy. Often eliding the difference between biography and autobiography (a move which can have legitimacy when it focuses on the nature and use of life-histories, but which can also be limiting), Fischer surveys numerous lives of religious leaders, and then autobiographies by scientists, enthusiastically distinguishing "more useful" from "less useful" texts on the basis of what can be learnt by "triangulating them together" with other complimentary visions of selfhood (103). While Bergland's strategy for getting round the "apparent" dominance of one voice in autobiography is to find a way of reading that locates plurality within the textual field in which the voice speaks, Fischer pins his faith on extrinsic comparison. Considered in large groups, but without much attention being paid to their own discursive character, autobiographies can generally "provide access to a substantive cultural field" (100).

Further ramifications of autobiography and ethnicity are explored in Hertha D. Wong's "Plains Indian Names and the 'Autobiographical Act,'" and in part of Paul Jay's "Posing: Autobiography and the Subject of Photography." Wong's account of the practice of serial naming, whereby one receives a different name at different stages of life, depending on such factors as achievement in the community, has profound metaphorical, if not many literal, resonances in the context of autobiography: "taken collectively, such serial names are like miniature autobiographies, organizing an individual's life-story by documenting the patterns of physical and spiritual event that shape that life" (232). N. Scott Momaday's *The Names: A Memoir* provides a

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focus here, as it does in Paul Jay's discussion of the role of visual memory in autobiography. Seeking to demonstrate how "identity is always the result of a complex interaction between cultural forces and . . . private imagination" (209), Jay looks at instances in the works of Barthes, Duras, and Cindy Sherman, as well as Momaday's analysis of photographs of his mother, where a crucial dimension of the autobiographical work resides in the progressive construction of meanings virtually suspended in the realm of the image.

Like many writers in this volume, Jay stresses that self-representation is a complex process, and that gender is a major source of complexity because, as Sherman's work illustrates (albeit outside the realm of autobiography), gendered identity is negotiated in a social world dominated by the image. As Christopher Ortiz shows with regard to Carmen Martín Gaite's *The Back Room*, in the world of the image, gender is often closely bound up with genre. As she recounts her past, Martín Gaite's narrator reviews the subject positions available to women in the Francoist Spain where she grew up, with reference to the genres—film, fiction, fashion, and music—which provided images that shaped her youth. Here, the generic instability of the text itself (is the narrative voice of *The Back Room* primarily fictional or autobiographical, an "I or a she"?) productively mimics the "agonistic relationship" with social texts that makes identity uncertain. In Sidonie Smith's "Identity's Body," the locus of the image is the body, which "positions the autobiographical subject at the nexus of culturally specific examples" (270). The "eruption" of the body in recent autobiographical practice by women bears not only on gender but frequently on ethnicity, as in Maxine Hong Kingston's oft-cited *The Woman Warrior*, and on sexual orientation. Looking back at Virginia Woolf's "A Sketch of the Past," Smith underlines not only the crucial childhood experiences that made Woolf's body abject to her, but also, in the second half of the "Sketch," the extraordinary account of what Smith calls "the socio-familial regulation of the body" at 22 Hyde Park Gate where Virginia and her sisters were expected to clean the house for the males in the family. Smith contrasts Woolf's attempts to erase her body with *Loving in the War Years*, by the lesbian Chicana writer Cherríe Moraga, a text which keeps the body firmly in the center of the picture, "attending to the mediations enacted on the body by the body politic," through a "destabilizing cultural performance" (286) where the body's color, gender, and sexual identity make it a site of carnivalesque disruptions.

Disruption, performance, and social mapping of the body are central to Shirley Neuman's discussion of "Autobiography and the Construction of the Female," which explicitly raises questions of autobiography and agency. Starting like Smith from the "near effacement" of bodies in the autobiographical tradition, Neuman

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considers what she sees as two "anomalous moments" where "a socially inscribed feminine body becomes both the subject of and the process in the text" (294): Kate Simon's *Bronx Primitive* and Violette Leduc's autobiographical trilogy inaugurated by *La Bâtarde* in 1964. The discussion of Leduc is especially valuable since, as Neuman's often brilliant account shows, her autobiographical *oeuvre* is undoubtedly among the strongest and most resonant of the age. Tracing out the themes of illegitimacy, ugliness, and wavering sexual object choice, Neuman demonstrates Leduc's acute understanding of how the female body is ideologically produced, and how a staging of the "cultural script of femininity" can serve (or betray) the search for identity. But if the author of *La Bâtarde* casts her life-history as a series of performances, Neuman rightly suggests that in Leduc the writing of autobiography is itself strongly performative (through its relation to the reader and its metadiscursive dimension). And this constitutes a restoration of agency, to the extent that Leduc, as writer, stands outside gender ideology as well as within it, "making visible the repression, displacements, submissions . . . that are among its effects and that it represses" (311).

If genre, gender, and ethnicity have provided the principal terms for a fruitful dialogue between autobiography and postmodernism, particularly with regard to the question of agency, *Autobiography and Postmodernism* has the merit of also pointing in other directions. David P. Haney's "Nuptial Interruptions: Autobiographical Boundaries in Wordsworth's 'Farewell,'" a close reading of a single poem by a dead white European male canonical authority, is less out of place than it might seem. Its critical bearings may be taken from a different constellation in the postmodern firmament, one where the stars are Derrida, Bloom, and Gadamer, but Haney's essay does show that an emphasis on the textual play of figures can also provide new ways of exploring autobiographical texts. Particularly rewarding here is the way Haney's focus on the question of boundaries, including those of genres, leads him to open up two fertile areas of inquiry. The first (also touched on by Sidonie Smith) is the logic of the gift, as rethought in Derrida's discussion of Mauss, and subsequently in the work of a number of contemporary theorists for whom the asymmetries and aporias of gift-exchange encapsulate crucial reformulations of the ethical which are vital to some of the richest strands in postmodern theory. Although Haney's way of analyzing Wordsworth's poem about his forthcoming marriage as an autobiographical text only scratches the surface of this particular issue, the possibility of rethinking the autobiographical act in terms of what Georges Bataille calls "the gift of self" (a theme, incidentally, crucial to Leduc) is clearly adumbrated.

The second area, which also has an ethical tinge, but is primarily epistemological, concerns Stanley Cavell's distinction between

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knowledge and acknowledgment. With its orientation towards the recovery of the everyday and the ordinary (crucial categories for autobiography), Cavell's work is concerned with the otherness of the world, and of experience, and explores ways of resisting both the clamor of knowledge and the dead end of skepticism. Seen as a fuller step beyond knowledge, which encompasses knowledge's limits, acknowledgment, as Haney rightly sees, has a bearing on that self-knowledge to which autobiography, often deludedly, aspires. In Wordsworth's case, Haney argues, self-representation and self-knowledge are subordinated to more urgent, and equally autobiographical questions: "negotiating the construction of various selves and preparing for the future" (259). Autobiographical writing or performance here carves another kind of route towards agency. In common with many of the perspectives opened in this volume, it has an orientation towards the future rather than the past, a feature of autobiography which is by no means new in itself, but which postmodernism has allowed us to see more clearly, in a way that promises well for the future of autobiography itself.

Michael Sheringham

H. Porter Abbott, *Beckett Writing Beckett: The Author in the Autograph*. Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1996. 196 pp. $29.95, ISBN 0-8014-3246-4.

H. Porter Abbott's latest book represents the confluence of many streams of interest in his research. His first book, *The Fiction of Samuel Beckett: Form and Effect*, broke new ground when it was first published in 1973, and his *Diary Fiction: Writing as Action* (1984), while also treating Beckett, focused on life narratives. Thus this latest, which represents the realization of certain theoretical ideas that he explored in his 1988 article, "Autobiography, Autography, Fiction: Groundwork for a Taxonomy of Textual Categories," is a welcome addition.

For Abbott himself, the volume appears to represent a major advance in his work, for he writes, "What I am proposing is a fundamental categorical shift in our reading of Beckett, one that moves him out of fiction altogether and relocates him in that rarely occupied subset of autography" (17–18). He further intensifies this bold proposal by repeating Deirdre Bair's suggestion that her biography provoked a response from Beckett in the form of *Company*. He explains that "if Bair's biography is at all involved, then *Company* is best seen as a response or emergency action, occasioned by the imminence of a narrative presenting itself as the story of Samuel Beckett's life" (18–

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19). He adds, "for if my argument is correct, then her work would have threatened roughly forty years of concentrated endeavor" (19). Such a statement alone could raise the ire of Beckett scholars, who a few years ago initiated a regular column entitled "Corrections to the Beckett Biography" in *The Beckett Circle: Newsletter of the Samuel Beckett Society!*

But accuracy of biography is apparently not relevant to Abbott's argument. The missing "bio" appears to be a red herring, since Abbott stresses that autography does not entail the "aligning of fictional texts with the personal history" (ix). There is no Beckett debris to find in these texts. Moreover, autography "avoids not only the implications of historical narrative in 'bio' but also the semantic baggage of 'self,' a term as problematical for Beckett as the term 'story'" (x).

The question then looms: What is autography if not a narrative form somehow related to the author's life, and if not the latter, why would Bair's biography have "threatened" Beckett's work? Abbott responds to this question by defining autography as "action." He prefers "the coinage 'autographical action,' for it concentrates attention on the text, both as 'self'-writing and as immediate action taking place as it is written." Rather than a narrative form, it is a "mode of action taken in the moment of writing" (x). This kind of action, however, is not limited to the writer, for in "Autobiography, Autography, Fiction," he also includes the reader: "to read autographically is not to erase the author but to keep him or her in view" (608). I soon learned that autography takes many forms and that the word cannot easily be explained beyond pithy statements. Throughout his argument, Abbott skillfully integrates the work of current scholarship by presenting previous arguments, then exploring where they might lead. Anyone interested in the field of Beckett studies, auto(bio)graphy, and literary criticism in general will find this work compelling and provocative, with conveniently placed footnotes rather than endnotes.

While Abbott weaves in poststructuralist arguments concerning the effacement of the author, and discusses "narratricide" in his first chapter, little by little it becomes clear that in spite of his use of deconstructive strategies he himself is trying to subvert the subverter. Having heard for so long about the death of the author and having been made more and more aware of the power of sociocultural authority over the act of reading, I found it rather ironic that Abbott appeared to resurrect the "author" through his reading of Beckett. It was, after all, Beckett that Michel Foucault used as standard bearer for his claim of the death of the author in his now famous essay, "What is an Author?" That Abbott might achieve the opposite end using Beckett would effect a critical symmetry.

Abbott is quite aware that the resuscitation of the author, with the attendant questions of origins and originality, would appear

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retrograde, but he is unafraid to ask "What are the limits of any critique of origins, authority, or unity of being?" (42). Indeed, he sees well how poststructuralist analyses succeed in normalizing Beckett and enable us to read the most recalcitrant of his texts. However, he argues that these "impositions ought not to be confused with the force that brings any new text into existence," that "the final returns on the subject of origins and authoring are not yet in" (48).

While not directly opposing such readings of Beckett, Abbott uses their strategies to resuscitate the author. He traces certain tropes like the "onward" trope of Victorian times and shows how from his earlier (*Waiting for Godot*) to his latest (*Worstward Ho*) works, Beckett inserts himself within this discourse only to ultimately transmute it (37). Thus he, like the Unnamable, can ask where do these words come from, denying authority and authorship over them, while at the same time exerting power over that tradition. I have probably overstated Abbott's argument, but ultimately I believe that this is his end.

Like Derrida, Abbott juxtaposes unexpected texts, hoping to prod surprises from proximity. It is a felicitous technique. For example, he places H. G. Wells's *The Time Machine* alongside *Endgame*, *Enough*, and *How It Is*, as well as some other shorter pieces. This juxtaposition enables Abbott to coax out points of comparison that place these works in the dys/utopia context, though Beckett subverts rather than affirms conventionalized responses to the dream of utopia (136). Indeed, as Abbott rightly points out, "Beckett's work glosses deconstruction"—before the term was invented, I might add (40).

The book is made up of nine chapters, some of which have been previously published, but here ingeniously reworked under the umbrella of autography. In these chapters Abbott discusses mostly Beckett's later work, but also includes a comparison of his first full-length play *Eleutheria* (1947) and *Krapp's Last Tape* (1958). I would be doing Abbott a disservice by trying to reduce his complex and provocative arguments into thumbnail accounts. These must be followed carefully and savored for the unexpected surprises and powerful insights peppered here and there. For example, his description of *Ohio Impromptu* reveals Abbott's fine eye for paradox: "Beckett has put both audience and author at once inside and outside the play. He has figured them (audience and author) in the play as both the reader and the read" (174–5). He argues for a "political Beckett" whose political dimension has been largely ignored because he has been "critically packaged" in a way that emphasizes his modernist aesthetics and strangeness, rather than placing him in "a dys/utopian framework" (133). He explains Beckett's crossings between prose and stage script as his desire to escape the tyranny of the reader to exercise the tyranny of the director. He explains in a footnote: "So it is possible to say that what theater in its staged

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condition does is make vivid the tyranny inherent in all textual encounters" (121). But on the stage the director holds the power.

In spite of all these fine insights I was still unable to get a good handle on autography. Ultimately, the best and broadest (but perhaps least helpful) definition that Abbott provides is buried in a footnote in "Autobiography, Autography, Fiction": "one leaves a signature, or self-identifying trace, everywhere in what one writes" (615). In *Beckett Writing Beckett*, autography is Abbott's device to reinsert the life into the work, to place the writer into the writing so that one can speak again of achievement rather than artifact.

Abbott takes this tack not as "an opposition" but as "a counterweight" to today's criticism that is apt to discount the achievement of the individual artist. According to him, to appreciate Beckett is to see his "art as a life project, a project in which an exacting craftsman made and remade his art and, in that process, was enabled to observe the trace of distinctive originating power which somehow belonged uniquely to him" (183). Beckett's autography is "nonnarrative self-writing": "that unformed intensity of being in the present which at every point in the text seeks to approach itself . . . not to the end of fictional creation but to the end of being Beckett, Beckett as it were *avant la lettre*, Beckett before he is Beckett" (18).

This reclamation of the writer and his rights does not involve the "bio," for the Beckett Abbott has revealed is the one born of the text, emerging from that space and nowhere else. However, to be able to recognize that uniqueness, that originality, the touchstone of his biography is necessary. For Beckett admirers, 1996 is a banner year, because of the appearence not only of Abbott's book, but also of many more that deal with the man himself. Notable among them are Mel Gussow's *Conversations with and about Beckett*, Lois Gordon's *The World of Samuel Beckett 1906–1946*, and James Knowlson's long-awaited authorized biography, *Damned to Fame*. The latter no doubt will clarify some ambiguities.

Jean Yamasaki Toyama

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T. Lindsay Baker and Julie P. Baker, eds. *The WPA Oklahoma Slave Narratives*. Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 1996. 541 pp. $24.95, ISBN 0-8061-2859-3.

In the spring of 1990 an archivist at the Oklahoma Historical Society in Oklahoma City alerted researchers T. Lindsay Baker and Julie P. Baker to the existence of a cache of freedmen's narratives "that nobody ha[d] ever done much with." Research at the National Archives and in Oklahoma convinced the Bakers that this material, some never published, deserved to be collected and disseminated. They proceeded to examine and edit what they had discovered in order to publish in a single volume all of the known Oklahoma freedmen's narratives from the 1930s. In bringing together and contextualizing these narratives they have done a great service to historiography.

At the outset it must be said these are not exactly "slave narratives," a term usually understood as a body of autobiographical writing in which nineteenth century blacks recounted the experience of suffering, escape, and deliverance from slavery. Such vivid depictions of what Arna Bontemps called "the Negro's suffering in his private hell of oppression" constitute a rich, indispensable source on the institution of slavery as viewed by the victims shortly after emerging from their ordeal. The classic slave narratives are stirring and often highly literary textualizations of human experience in extremis.

In contrast, the narratives before us are better termed "testimony." They comprise the entirety of those narratives extant for Oklahoma and were prepared by the Federal Writers' Project from interviews conducted with elderly former slaves from spring 1937 to early 1938, some seventy years after the Emancipation Proclamation. Though both are mediated narratives, the distinction between slave narrative (or autobiography or memoir) and testimony is a valuable one, I think, given that different mental and confessional processes and constraints were at work in each and that they originated at different historical junctures. Moreover, the nineteenth century narratives were meant to supply an effective weapon against slavery itself, whereas the WPA narratives were commissioned to document the past. The production process, designed to elicit and set down the testimonies by freedmen, was complex, collaborative, and intended to provide answers for twentieth century Americans about what it means to live as a slave and what it means to live free—and ultimately how it becomes possible to explore a cultural heritage that can be acknowledged and reclaimed by both black and white Americans.

Interviewers recruited from unemployment rolls were sent out with a questionnaire designed in Washington by John A. Lomax, director of the Folklore Division of the WPA Writers project. The

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answers obtained were duly noted and turned over to writers, who then converted the responses to narrative format, keeping the integrity of the original speech and respecting with remarkable success the quality of oral performance. One imagines that doing this field work without benefit of tape recorder must have been arduous and limiting in and of itself. Even without immediate access to the questionnaire one can sense the control exerted through what must have been systematized questions, such as "Who were your masters? How were you treated? What do you recall about the Civil War? Did you attend church? What schooling did you receive? Do you believe in spirits? What cures or remedies did you use? How did you learn that you were no longer a slave?" The questionnaire pursued a uniformity of focus which elicited abundant ethnographic information about foodways, folk medicine, belief systems, and recollections of life under slavery, but allowed little free rein to the subjects. Reporters made decisions in the field that affected content, as in the case of one employee who admitted, "My interviews are short but I find them such a repetition that I do not write all they tell me." Transcriptions of the interviews went through preliminary, intermediate, and final drafts, under guidance from the national project office, which also instructed writers on the rendering of dialect and uniform presentation for stylistic consistency.

Baker and Baker call for care and sensitivity in interpreting the final product, noting that "Readers of the slave narratives must approach them with the same caution applied to any other primary historical evidence." Discrepancies may have originated at the scene of the interview, where "the response elicited by white field workers likely differed considerably from those gathered by African American reporters." With three black reporters and seven non-black, it is indeed reasonable to expect differences that will invite detailed qualitative comparison by future researchers. Also, some subjects clearly had difficulty recalling their experience, while others readily gave detailed and vivid accounts. Wherever possible, the editors sought to corroborate and validate historical events, locations, and persons mentioned by the former slaves, but made a wise decision to edit "very lightly" what had already been sifted through the complex interviewing and transcription process.

The result of the editors' meticulous labors is a valuable tome that presents a complete set of Oklahoma testimonies, uniting the documents that had languished at the Oklahoma Historical Society since 1938 with those held in Washington. Distilled from 1200 pages of typescript, manuscript, and scribbled notes, here for the first time are all of the known WPA slave narratives obtained from Oklahoma, testimonies taken from 130 African Americans ranging in age from 69 to 120. Almost half of these interviews (55 of them) had never been

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sent to Washington and have been previously accessible only at the Oklahoma Historical Society. Some of these had been anthologized by Norman R. Yetman in 1970, and George Rawick also in the 1970s, but thirteen interviews were missed by them and constitute fresh material, appearing in print here for the first time.

The experience of reading the testimonies leads us to discover not a predictable, oft-told story but one of remarkable diversity and power. It does not support the view of a monolithic African-American culture coming out of a uniform slavery experience. In addition to documentating varied experiences under differing economic arrangements, we find information on slavery and daily life under Cherokee, Choctaw, Creek, Seminole, and Chickasaw masters (frequently but not always less oppressive than whites). Baker and Baker characterize the testimonies about slavery among the "Five Tribes" as one of the most intriguing aspects of the Oklahoma testimonies. The frequent reference to interactions and intermarriages of African Americans and American Indians of the southeastern tribes suggests the construction of a hybrid identity that is rarely discussed and warrants further research. Baker and Baker document cases of blacks, often of dual heritage, who enrolled themselves as freedmen members of the Cherokee Nation, an act of affiliation that highlights Native American identity and submerges blackness.

The inherent and intrinsic descriptive power of many of the narratives is remarkable—despite the constraint of the questionnaire, the control exerted by interviewers, and the complex filters integral to the project itself, the resiliency and the character of the informants stand out. Often a personal discursive style comes through, overpowering the questionnaire and transporting the reader into another time and place. "I remember them slave days as well as it was yesterday. . . . Just like yesterday," says Daniel William Lucas, a man of 94. More pointed is the rejoinder of William Watson, age 85: "Do I remember slavery? Who could forget these lash prints on my back. . . ." Hannah McFarland, age 85, says candidly "I can't say I lak white people even now, 'cause dey done so much agin us." Lest the reader conclude that dialect is the idiom of all the testimonies, let me quote Robert Grinstead, 80: "My viewpoint as to slavery is that it was as much detrimental to the white race as it was to the Negroes, as one elevated one's mind too highly, and the other degraded one's mind too lowly."

The subjects may have been reticent due to the formal interviewing environment, but the reader encounters no dearth of graphic description of abuse and human rights violations, as well as plentiful examples of resistance to violence and courage under fire. Many individuals witnessed degrading and pitiful scenes at slave markets in Richmond, Charleston, and other locales. Prince Bee, age 85,

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remembers himself as a little boy standing bare chested on the auction block in Mississippi, and Liza Smith, 91, never forgot the day her parents were sold away from her at the Richmond slave market. Common and recurrent motifs of the testimonies include constant fear of patrollers who would set ferocious bloodhounds on the slaves, incursions and burnings by the Klan, and atrocities committed by masters and mistresses alike. One woman, Sally Carter, age 83, recalls her father being murdered for rushing to the assistance of his wife, to untie her. Carrie Davis, age 97, and others tell us that "They laid peoples 'cross barrels and whupped 'em wid bull whips till the blood come." One finds repeated recollections that people were whipped until unconscious, made to go barefoot on frozen ground, and burned at the nose and ears with fire brands. These testimonies resound much in the same way as those more recent ones from Holocaust survivors of the Nazis, victims of an era that came fast on the heels of the completion of the WPA project. One can only regret that video technology, which even now is being used to capture Holocaust testimonies, was developed too late to be a tool for the WPA interviewers of 1937.

The Bakers' find is our gain. Their work enlarges the body of material available to researchers concerned with the experience of slavery and the subjectivity of African-Americans who survived the long ordeal of captivity and human degradation. All those wishing to explore the nuances of regional and intercultural experience in the antebellum era, and others with specific interest in the theory and practice of ethnographic interviewing, will want to consult this volume.

Lorraine Elena Roses

Charles Caramello, *Henry James, Gertrude Stein, and the Biographical Act*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1996. 416 pp. $39.95, ISBN 0-8078-2267-1.

Billed as "the first comparative study of . . . two great American expatriate writers," this book illuminates new facets of James's and Stein's distinctive engagements with modernist premises, and elaborates heretofore overlooked connections between them, connections that extend previous conceptions of the dynamics of literary precursivity. Because Caramello uses the "biographical act" itself as a site through which to explore these larger concerns, his study also advances understandings of the evolution of literary portraiture as a genre, which in James's, and more directly, Stein's

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hands develops into what might be called autoreferential-biography. As Caramello puts it, "they wrote biographical portraiture . . . intentionally and studiously as a cover for autobiography" (ix). That is, he presents James and Stein as sophisticated portraitists whose innovations also included strategies of self-fashioning through which they created artistic genealogies and located themselves as exemplary within them—as "emblems of an ideal history of modernism"—an assessment that Caramello's study tends to confirm.

One real strength of this ambitious book is its close and careful readings of primary works, each of which embodies central aspects of the themes of precursivity and modernist experimentation that form Caramello's larger focus: James's *Hawthorne* (Chapter 2) and *William Wetmore Story and His Friends* (Chapter 3), Stein's *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (Chapter 4) and *Four in America* (Chapter 5). Chapter 1, "Precursors," elaborates James's and Stein's general theories of biography and portraiture. Here, Caramello lays the groundwork for his overall argument that James and Stein regarded portraiture as "the foundational genre" because it focuses so directly on questions of representation: both explored "how the effort to represent the real model [often themselves] with accuracy collided with the need to use abstract models in the representation itself" (17). Seeking to resolve this theoretical problem, Stein and James—in different ways—"each pushed art not only toward obsession with the moment and with the means of artistic production, but also toward obsession with the identity of artistic producers . . . a double push perfectly suited to portraiture" (20). For Stein and James, portraiture was an ideal medium through which to work out some central modernist problems and to elaborate their genealogy as moderns in the process of advancing the genre itself—James from romance to realism and Stein from realism to modernism.

The chapters on James are carefully done and illuminating—Caramello's revisionary reading of Hawthorne's specific influence on the trajectory of James's artistic development is particularly strong. However, the Stein chapters provide perhaps a more direct—and thus convincing—arena for elaboration of the book's central thematics of precursivity, modernist experimentation, and representation/self-representation as reflected in the portrait genre. As Caramello says in his conclusion, "the essence of Stein's style and her *difference* is her insistence on conceiving her subjects as including an initiating subject plus her own treatment of it" (194). In Chapter 4, "In the Heroic Age of Cubism," Caramello reads *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* as a self-contesting, even parodic, hybridization of autobiographical memoir, biographical memoir, and romantic historical novel—of autoportraiture, portraiture, and narrative. In it, he argues, Stein experiments with genre in order to effect a "textual marriage of

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perspectives and voices," of fact and imaginative reconstruction, that not only deconstructs patriarchal heterosexual marriage and posits lesbian marriage as a legitimate, possibly superior, alternative, but also positions Stein herself as an acknowledged literary genius within a male-dominated artistic tradition. Ultimately Stein used the *Autobiography* to explore "patriarchal representations of women and women's lives, especially modernist representations in art and literature," and to advance an alternative representation, "one that joins the artistic and the domestic in a different version of women and their relations," both private and public (122). In this reading, the text is viewed as an overtly and exemplary "Sapphic Cubist text" that simultaneously describes, celebrates, and enacts modern love and modern art. Since the shifting voices and perspectives of the *Autobiography* make it impossible to locate either Toklas or Stein as subordinate to the other, the text suggests on both formal and thematic levels that their relationship itself was non-hierarchical, non-patriarchal, egalitarian.

Caramello's claim that the *Autobiography* is a pointed lesbian feminist critique of patriarchal institutions, and that lesbian marriage and a feminist rewriting of history are its central themes (and, by extension, central preoccupations throughout Stein's career) is, I think, more open to debate than Caramello's relatively narrow reading allows for—not least because Stein is so notoriously difficult to pin down to such clear statements (in the *Autobiography* or anywhere else), a fact that much of the recent feminist scholarship on Stein has demonstrated. To be fair, Caramello does footnote studies that would oppose his claims and acknowledges that Stein often made ambiguous and contradictory statements in her work (and did so in the *Autobiography*). And his insistence on reading the text in its specificity, as an interesting and important work in its own right, is an important corrective to readings that would reduce it to simply a quirky instance of the larger genre of autobiography. Nonetheless, he hangs so much of his argument on this particular reading that it is difficult to qualify it sufficiently—despite his claim in the Preface that his arguments, especially about Stein, "must remain inferential and . . . often speculative" (xi).

Caramello also reads the *Autobiography* as an exemplary modernist portrait that answers Picasso's "Portrait of Miss Gertrude Stein" with Toklas's portrait of her, and more crucially for this study, that updates James's protomodernist *Portrait of a Lady* with her portrait of the twentieth century feminist subject, Toklas. In this way, Stein places herself as James's direct successor in the development of composition in the twentieth century, while also critiquing his aesthetics of representing women through her implicit portrait of women representing themselves. These connections are elaborated in the book's

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final chapter, which explores James's influence on the literary output and aesthetic theories of Stein's late phase, during which she turned from autobiographical portraiture to cubist portrait narration, most explicitly in *Four in America*. Caramello reads this overlooked text as portraiture that specifically enacts Stein's redefined sense of narration —which involved excluding "story" and trying to represent the nonteleological "movement" of a subject while simultaneously presenting a "real narrative" about the process of this representation. *Four in America* also deviates from accepted norms of biography in more extreme ways, as Stein actively advances counterfactual but imaginatively "accurate" biographies of her subjects in which Ulysses S. Grant becomes a religious leader, Wilbur Wright a painter, George Washington a novelist, and James a general. Through this strategy, Stein poses questions about processes of self and cultural representation (and representativeness), and advances her "covert thesis"—her own centrality in twentieth century aesthetics. Specifically, as Caramello's chapter title "Generals James and Stein" suggests, she represents an autobiographically and culturally mediated James, who "acted in deed *like* a general," as well as a textual James who *is* general because constructed according to that analogy within the text; finally, she composes this text as an exemplification of general principles "formulated by James and developed with appropriate variations by Stein" (176).

In the closing pages of the book, Caramello describes three "orders of difficulty" posed by Stein's texts: their "polyphonic and polygraphic" surface complexity, their presentation of subject—frequently representing the interpenetration of Stein's initiating subject, her treatment of it, her analysis of that treatment, and her representation of herself in the process of representation—and their demand that we read individual texts within a matrix of intertextual relations to other texts in her corpus. This seemingly simple formulation—accurate and *hard won* as any reader who has struggled through Stein knows—suggests that Caramello has engaged closely and carefully with some of Stein's most important works and has given us innovative readings of them. This impression is reinforced by the impressive scholarly apparatus surrounding the book—of its 275 pages, 75 are comprised of footnotes, bibliography, and index. My only real reservation about *Henry James, Gertrude Stein, and the Biographical Act* is the rather significant gap between its relatively narrow focus on portraiture (and here not all examples of the genre that each wrote) and the conclusions about the overall trajectory of each author's career that emerge from these readings—including Caramello's claim that portraiture represented "*the* foundational genre" for both James and Stein.

Ellen E. Berry

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Stanley Weintraub, *Shaw's People: Victoria to Churchill*. University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 1996. 255 pp. $29.50, ISBN 0-271-01501-2.

In *Shaw's People: Victoria to Churchill*, noted biographer Stanley Weintraub continues his piecemeal biography of Bernard Shaw by collecting in one volume twelve essays which see Shaw through the lenses of his contemporaries—Queen Victoria, Oscar Wilde, William Booth, Edith Adams, W. B. Yeats, James Joyce, Frank Harris, T. E. Lawrence, Sean O'Casey, Siegfried Trebitsch, and Winston Churchill, in that order. Ten of the essays, originally published between 1960 and 1993, have been revised and updated, although in some cases references to the most recent scholarly work are missing. Two of the essays are largely new, developed from reviews or papers.

While these essays simply show Shaw's relations with a variety of people, mostly famous, whom Weintraub found interesting in their own right, a possible principle of selection is suggested by the fact that most of the relationships reveal certain surprising paradoxes in the Shaw character, in which case Weintraub is in a sense following up on the theme of an earlier collection, *The Unexpected Shaw*. He seems entranced by the way Shaw keeps surprising us with facets of personality that one would not expect. Whether the contradictions are really in Shaw or in perceptions of Shaw is a question strongly posed and variously explored by these essays.

It is not surprising that the writer of *Victoria: An Intimate Biography* should begin with the purely imaginary relationship between Shaw and the queen, which demonstrates that although people may be unknown to each other they nevertheless can play important roles in the other's psychic life. Queen Victoria must have played that role for many of her subjects, but the surprise is that she played such a positive, admired role in the life of perhaps the most notoriously anti-Victorian of them all, Shaw having publicly dedicated himself to getting right-side-up what he saw as the perverse upside-downedness of that morality we call "Victorian." Somehow Victoria seemed to transcend the thing called "Victorian" and thus escaped the brunt of his attack. Indeed, to Shaw, Victoria in her later years was "the best actress in the realm" (12), and even while directing satire her way he found reason to admire her as "the inspired, self-educated Shavian amateur" (28) and as a "born boss" whose peace-keeping abilities in Europe Shaw lamented the loss of in the Edwardian era.

Weintraub is very good at the biographer's trade of digging up the little incidents that tell the larger story, as in this essay. He seems to have spotted every time Shaw made any mention of the queen, and he draws telling inferences about Shaw's character from them, showing how, from reviewing official portraits of the queen and

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commenting on her jubilee appearances to writing her speech for a mock-legislature in which Annie Besant played Victoria, Shaw was in seemingly constant attendance upon the queen, giving us glimpses of "an old Victorian" behind the revolutionist's appearance (28).

Weintraub is most interesting when most inventive, as when he spots Victoria secretly sitting for a portrait of a Shavian character. This guessing about models for literary portraits is necessarily speculative, full of "possiblies" and "probablies," but most intriguing. He finds that *Caesar and Cleopatra*, for instance, is probably more about the British Empire than the Roman, and suggests that it possibly even recreates the young Victoria in the young Cleopatra. Both young queens are guided by a dedicated but bullying nurse (Ftatateeta suggests Victoria's Baroness Lehzen) and by a witty pedagogue and elder statesman (Caesar suggests Viscount Melbourne, Victoria's first Prime Minister). So, too, Cleopatra's dressing in mourning black at the end of that play is meant to remind us of the extended mourning that Victoria went into after the death of Albert (even though it's Ftatateeta's death that causes Cleopatra's mourning). And so on.

Some of Weintraub's other essays follow the pattern of proposing models for Shavian characters. In "A Jennifer from Australia," he proposes Edith Adams, the Australian wife of a tubercular poet and friend of Shaw's friends, the Salts, as the model for Jennifer Dubedat of *The Doctor's Dilemma*. In "'Lawrence of Arabia,' Bernard Shaw's Other Saint Joan," Weintraub adds to the usual identifying of T. E. Lawrence as the model for Private Meek in *Too True to Be Good* a good guess that Lawrence also stood as model for the Aubrey of the same play, and, more remarkably, for Shaw's Saint Joan. As he was writing *Saint Joan*, Shaw "seems to have sensed the uncanny resemblance that the work in progress bore to the book at his elbow—*Seven Pillars* — and its enigmatic author" (166). However, Weintraub wisely concludes one of his essays of this type by reminding us that "the creative process is a complex one" and that "Shaw's characters were often an amalgam of real life and imagination" (92).

Weintraub is to be congratulated for taking such imaginative leaps, even when they land in inconsistencies of interpretation, for this raises the usual plodding along of literal-minded biography to that level of creativity where the artist himself spent his most productive and perhaps happiest moments. And thus, in many of the essays, the best parts are not the dutiful noting of encounters between Shaw and somebody else, but Shaw's transmuting of these encounters into psychically satisfying art. For example, what sticks out in another piece is not Weintraub's detailed accounting of the relationship between Shaw and Wilde, most of which is well known, but the exploration of *You Never Can Tell* and *Man and Superman* as "Shavianized Wilde" (52), as attempts to "humanize the genre of

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imperturbable impudent comedies" (49) epitomized by *The Importance of Being Earnest*. In his lengthy and interesting treatment of the Shaw-Churchill relationship, for another example, one of the highlights is Weintraub's inspired guess that a speech Winston Churchill delivered at a Dublin dinner contributed greatly to the characterization of Tom Broadbent in *John Bull's Other Island*.

Weintraub's clever ferreting out of Shaw's intertextual relationships, in fact, could be deemed the most worthwhile part of the book. He finds so much of the Salvation Army General William Booth's *In Darkest England and the Way Out* in *Major Barbara* that he terms the play "a theatrical *Darkest England*" (57). As he explores the ambivalence in the Shaw-Yeats relationship, he finds intertextuality a two-way street, as each author replies to the other through the characterizations of art, *Candida* and *A Vision* being primary examples. So, too, he finds sections of Churchill's *Great Contemporaries* and Shaw's *Sixteen Self-Sketches* to be episodes in a life-long debate. The most obvious case of intertextuality is in the many influences of Shaw's work upon soul mate Sean O'Casey, from the most obvious, as in the outright quoting of Shaw in O'Casey's first drama of ideas, *The Shadow of a Gunman*, or O'Casey's constant references to *John Bull's Other Island*, especially in *Purple Dust*, to the less obvious, as in the possibility that Captain Boyle in *Juno and the Paycock* was in some sense "a genial parody of *Heartbreak House*'s Captain Shotover" (180), or in certain parallels between *Major Barbara* and *The Plough and the Stars*. The most startling case of intertextuality Weintraub develops reveals James Joyce's "seemingly obsessive Shavian reverberations" (139), from the possibility that Molly Bloom derives, at least in part, from Sally Lunn in Shaw's *Overruled*, to the fact that "in the encyclopaedic dream-vision that became *Finnegan's Wake*, Joyce would evoke Shaw over and over again in guises still emerging with each reading" (137). It is a compliment to this essay that it contributed much to the full-length treatment of Martha Fodaski Black's *Shaw and Joyce: The Art of Stolentelling*.

In the most curious pieces in the collection—on Shaw's relations with his would-be biographer Frank Harris and his German translator Siegfried Trebitsch—Weintraub offers first installments on what could be "a book of Shavian parasites." He asks "Why . . . did Shaw tolerate so many insufferable types in his life, and—seemingly—encourage many of them" (2)? Weintraub suggests that simple loyalty is a flaw in Shaw's character here, loyalty in the case of Harris to the man who at a crucial moment got Shaw his most important journalistic post, as drama critic for the *Saturday Review*, and in the case of Trebitsch to someone who answered Shaw's need to get known on the continent at an equally crucial time. That both men abused Shaw's loyalty makes his occasional exasperation with, and rough handling of, them quite

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understandable, but Weintraub still wonders if these relationships were quite healthy.

Weintraub's essay on H. L. Mencken suggests that there may also be a book in characterizing Shaw's ungrateful or turncoat disciples. Weintraub does an excellent job of charting the graph of Mencken's rising and falling estimations of Shaw, explaining it in terms of personality differences and of Mencken's own career—his need to set himself up as Shaw's successor as arch-heretic. "They would not have enjoyed each other's company," Weintraub writes: "To the ascetic Shaw, the obscenity-prone, heavy-smoking, beer-swilling Mencken represented almost everything he disliked about Americans" (75–6). To Mencken, Shaw was "not at all the heretic his fascinated victims see him, but an orthodox Scotch Presbyterian of the most cock-sure and bilious sort" (79). In his late period, however, after Mencken achieved the sort of notoriety he desired, he arrived at a more objective view, and admitted that he and Shaw were "working the same side of the street"—that is, "stating the obvious in terms of the scandalous" (81)—and returned to praising Shaw more often than not.

Perhaps with an eye toward providing historical structure for this loose collection, Weintraub places at the end a pillar of modern historical significance worthy to stand opposite the pillar placed at the beginning—as the subtitle announces, "Victoria to Churchill." That subtitle also sells books, of course. But at least the Shaw-Churchill relation was not purely imaginary. It began in antipathy, one of Churchill's first literary effusions being a ferocious onslaught on Shaw for some satirical darts thrown at the British Army, and whenever stories are told nowadays about the relationship it is almost always the antipathy that is the point. But Weintraub shows it to have been a more protean relationship, the two at times finding common ground and reasons for mutual admiration. On the few occasions they actually met, in fact, they mostly seemed to get along quite well, Churchill remarking that he was "instantly attracted by the sparkle and gaiety of his conversation" (215). Shaw in turn appreciated the part Churchill's grand style played in seeing Britain through WW II, and he preferred a thoughtful activist like Churchill to the amiable nullities other prime ministers had been. Yet that history remembers them as great quarrelers, hurling deflating gibes at one another, is not a complete injustice, for nothing can overlook their being on opposite sides of the great political debates of their time.

Shaw's People is a paradoxical title, for this is a portrait gallery of people who were anything *but* Shaw's, insofar as they all resolutely insisted upon acting independently of his advice and wishes for them. On the other hand, Shaw's people did become truly *his* when he transmuted them into an art that expressed *his* imagination and *his* psychic needs.

Richard F. Dietrich

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Carolyn J. Moss, ed. *Kate Field: Selected Letters.* Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois UP, 1996. 283 pp. $49.95, ISBN 0-3093-2078-90.

How could it happen that one of the most widely known nineteenth century American women, known in Europe as well as in America, was so soon forgotten and rarely recalled for one hundred years? Carolyn J. Moss has made a major contribution to what one may hope will become a revival of the undeservedly forgotten Kate Field (1838–1896).

Twenty years ago, when I was writing a history of Lasell College in Auburndale, Massachusetts, I discovered that the seventeen-year old Kate Field had been a pupil at the then Lasell Female Seminary in 1855/6. The only daughter of St. Louis actors Joseph M. Field and Eliza Riddle Field, she had been sent to the new but highly regarded school by her wealthy Boston uncle, Milton H. Sanford. The only information I could find about Kate Field was in an old grangerized *Kate Field: A Record,* by Lilian Whiting, published four years after Kate's death in Hawai'i. More a compilation than a biography, Whiting's book nevertheless contains a considerable number of her friend Kate's letters. The copy of the book I had was supplemented with newspaper articles, notices, and most interestingly, an original letter showing Kate's large, free-flowing handwriting. Of course there were entries on Kate in the *Dictionary of American Biography* ("a woman of exceptional though eccentric intellectual gifts"), and in *Notable American Women* ("for three decades a personality in the public eye"), and references to her crop up in the biographies of such notables as John Brown (of Harper's Ferry), Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Walter Savage Landor, Alexander Graham Bell, Heinrich Schliemann, James T. and Annie Fields, and Helen Hunt Jackson. But with one delightful exception, these few sources constitute almost all that has been published about her. That exception is the work of Anthony Trollope and his later commentators. Trollope's 1883 *Autobiography* referred to a young American girl as "my most chosen friend" and "a ray of light to me." This girl was Kate Field, and many pages in N. John Hall's definitive biography of Trollope (1991) are devoted to her relationship to the novelist and members of his family.

Carolyn J. Moss's chronological arrangement of letters constitutes a life of Kate Field starting from 1843, when she was only four years old, to her death in 1896. Though Field's literary executor Lilian Whiting left the major collection of memorabilia in the Boston Public Library, Moss has located letters in thirty-one U.S. institutions. For the present volume she has selected slightly over half of the six hundred letters available to her. An appendix lists the additional letters chronologically, providing dates, present locations, and names of recipients. The letters actually printed are both inherently interesting

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and map out the course of Field's career. A seven-part biographical introduction is followed by a ten-part chronological arrangement of the letters. Extensive notations on individual letters, the result of meticulous research, make this a model of proper editing, and the fifteen illustrations are a welcome addition.

Field's correspondents are significant in various ways. Especially in the very early years, letters sent to her mother, her aunt, and close friends predominate. These letters are followed by a larger group of business letters concerning her travels, finances, lectures and stage appearances, and her work as foreign correspondent, drama critic, or general commentator for newspapers and magazines. She wrote frequently to three New York gentlemen: Whitelaw Reid, editor of the *New York Tribune*; Edmund Clarence Stedman, poet, critic, and Wall St. broker; and Laurence Hutton, author and drama critic. Though business letters, they also display a mutual respect and even affection between the correspondents. These and many other letters suggest that, while she had many women friends, Kate Field was at least as much at ease with men, and that they, in turn, were attracted to her. Though not a conventional beauty, Field was a handsome woman who obviously made the most of her appearance—someone once said it was worth going to her lectures just to see her. There are no scandals here, no love letters, and her one love affair when first in Europe remains no more than a shadow. What letters there were have been destroyed.

Moss also prints single letters from Field to such famous people as Twain, Dickens, Longfellow, Susan B. Anthony, and President Grover Cleveland. Though not the kind of tufthunter Boswell was, Field clearly did seek out the prominent, and although this volume does not provide the replies, Moss often summarizes them in the notes, giving us a sense of the various interchanges. In general, Field's letters concerned theatre and stage performances—both hers and others—in London and New York, her frequent Dickens lectures, and her dinner parties among the literati. She also frequently wrote about her remarkable success and devastating failures as a single woman making her own way in life. In later years, after establishing *Kate Field's Washington*, her own weekly newspaper, her interests became political as she fought for reducing or eliminating taxes on importing foreign works of art, or for requiring the Mormons to make polygamy illegal before accepting the Utah Territory as a state, or for annexing Hawai'i as part of the United States.

Why then was Field so soon forgotten? Perhaps because she was never an ardent feminist or a supporter of the WCTU. Though in favor of votes for women, Field was never a suffragette, and would never have chained herself to an iron fence to defy male dominance. Field also lectured on "The Intemperance of Prohibition," for while she

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believed in moderation, she would not support the extremist position of Frances Willard or Susan B. Anthony. Perhaps her years among sophisticated diners in Europe had moderated any American Puritanism she may have had. Enjoying a glass of wine, she would never have attacked saloons with a hatchet. Perhaps the major reason for her undeserved neglect, however, is the lack of a defining achievement. After a few moderate successes, she eventually failed as an actress. Her one major business adventure, The Ladies' Cooperative Dress Association, ended in financial disaster. Though her Washington newspaper was successful, she gave it up after four years to pursue political activity in Utah and Hawai'i, where she conferred with President Sanford B. Dole and visited several islands. This activity was helpful to the Cleveland administration, but her health failed, and after a swift decline, she died of pneumonia in Honolulu on May 19, 1896.

Now that we have Kate Field's letters, what next? Certainly a full biography, but what general readers need first are new editions of her writing. At present none of the publications are readily available. In an appendix Moss lists two theatre biographies of Adelaide Ristori and Charles Fechter; two travel books; six general volumes, including her once very popular *Pen Photographs of Charles Dickens's Readings;* six plays, including a number of comediettas; and many short stories and chapters in books. Though not listed individually, Moss estimates that Field wrote over three thousand magazine and newspaper articles. For historic reasons if no other, Fields's 1878 booklet *The History of Bell's Telephone* should be republished—Field not only advertised Bell's invention by receiving a phone call from Stratford-on-Avon while on stage in London, but also demonstrated the phone at Osborne House on the Isle of Wight for Queen Victoria. At the very least, some press should publish a selection from Kate Field's works.

In this volume, Carolyn J. Moss has done a great service. Ideally she will continue the project of restoring "one of the most remarkable women of the nineteenth century."

Donald J. Winslow

Gilbert B. Rodman, *Elvis After Elvis: The Posthumous Career of a Living Legend.* New York: Routledge, 1996. 231 pp. $17.95, ISBN 0-415-11002-5.

Students of music and popular culture are pretty much in agreement these days that Elvis Presley is dead. Despite almost twenty years of wishful sightings and visions on the part of the faithful, he is probably not holed up in or near a Burger King in Kalamazoo, Michigan

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preparing a triumphant comeback. Greil Marcus told us as much in his 1991 *Dead Elvis: A Chronicle of a Cultural Obsession* (Doubleday). Lest lingering doubts remain, however, Gilbert Rodman confirms the salient facts of Presley's 1977 demise in *Elvis After Elvis*. But Rodman also suggests reasons for the ongoing presence of Elvis in the national imagination.

In those domains, Elvis Presley is sometimes little more than a shared national joke. A couple of years ago, for example, I took a vanload of European visitors on a search for the source of the Mississippi River in the streams and spring-fed ponds of northern Minnesota. We stopped along the way to take in a variety of local tourist attractions: an abandoned mineshaft, a new casino operated by Native Americans, a museum devoted to the history of the interstate bus. But wherever we stopped, there was Elvis, as a decorative motif, a marker on a time line, a cheery, welcoming, familiar presence. "Give us this day our daily Elvis!" became the motto of the trip. As Mojo Nixon once observed in the lyric to the best Elvis tribute song ever written, "Elvis *is* everywhere."

This is so, says Rodman, for three reasons. First, Elvis has become a mythic figure who speaks to ongoing problems and issues in American culture. Although he may have been just what startled parents all across the nation believed him to be when they applauded Ed Sullivan for showing the gyrating young phenomenon only from the waist up on a 1957 TV show, Elvis was also the subject of a mock election mounted in 1992 by the U.S. Postal Service to pick an image for a stamp. Would it be the young Elvis, of the Sullivan years, handsome as ten movie stars and dangerous as a snake in heat? Or the pudgy, aging Elvis of the Vegas years, a pictorial reminder that time dashes teenage dreams?

Rodman argues that the choice of Elvis stamps was more engaging to most Americans than the presidential election of the same year. Indeed, he continues, Bill Clinton may have won because he identified with the mythic Elvis by playing his music on the Arsenio Hall show. Clinton, in other words, aligned himself with pleasantly distant memories of youthful rebellion and energy while George Bush, sniping away at the Elvian characteristics of his opponent, merely managed to look sour and old.

The second source of Elvis's after-death appeal lies in his house, Graceland, the imposing Southern-style mansion that looms over U.S. 51 South, on the highway from downtown Memphis to rural Mississippi (where the owner was born). Unlike other stars, whose luster is linked to more evanescent things—a movie, a photo, a sound—Elvis is commemorated in a real, concrete place, preserved as a museum. And what is more, that place is on a major tourist route through the Sunbelt. The cult of Elvis flourishes in direct proportion

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to the ease of visitor access to the Jungle Room and the gold-plated bathroom fixtures on his private jet, parked across the street. Elvis Presley's Graceland is the second-most-visited private home in America—after Bill Clinton's White House.

On the other hand, living in Graceland and in Memphis may have isolated Elvis Presley needlessly from his contemporaries. If he had chosen to reside in hipper, cooler L.A., crowds wouldn't have mobbed him in the streets, says Rodman. Elvis may never have become the drugged-out recluse of his final years, prowling Memphis by night like a homegrown vampire.

Finally, Rodman says that Elvis's actual rise to stardom reshaped American culture so radically that he has become an intrinsic part of it. After Elvis, culture no longer meant museums and violins and privilege. It meant something bigger and freer, something more democratic, as Clinton's handlers surely sensed during the 1992 campaign.

All of this makes perfect sense—although not, perhaps, to the audience of Elvis fans to whom *Elvis After Elvis* would mean the most. Gilbert Rodman is well versed in the enormous body of Elvis literature: he knows his stuff. But like other theory "wonks," he is maddeningly self-reflective and given to long quotations, whereas the entirely sensible suggestions he offers to account for the supercharged longevity of Elvis might have been stated more directly and simply with no loss of authority. Elvis broke down barriers between high culture and the rest of us. In some twisted exercise in postmodern irony, however, the academic profession seems determined to build them up again, in Elvis's name. My best advice on *Elvis After Elvis?* Ignore the theory. Enjoy the conclusions.

Karal Ann Marling

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Reviewed Elsewhere

This issue contains reviews from the *Bulletin Critique du Livre Français*, *Études Anglaises*, *French Review*, *Journal of Popular Culture*, *Le Monde des Livres*, *Los Angeles Times Book Review* (*LATBR*), *New York Review of Books* (*NYRB*), *New York Times Book Review* (*NYTBR*), *The New Yorker*, *Queen's Quarterly*, *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France*, *Sight and Sound*, *Times Literary Supplement* (*TLS*), *Washington Post National Weekly Edition* (*WP*), and the *Women's Review of Books*.

Albert, Prince

Albert, Uncrowned King. Stanley Weintraub. New York: Free Press, 1997. 478 pp. $27.50.

"Stanley Weintraub gives a full and well-argued account of his hero's achievements. It is not very easy to read: The writing is turgid and somewhat inelegant. . . ."

Steven Runciman, *TLS*, Mar. 28, 1997: 11.

Alexandra, Tsarina. See **Nicholas, Tsar**.

Ames, Aldrich

Confessions of a Spy: The Real Story of Aldrich Ames. Pete Early. New York: Putnam, 1997. 364 pp. $27.50.

"'Confessions of a Spy' is the fifth column on the Ames bookshelf. Its greatest strength is Ames's voice. Here is a fair portrait of a half-repentant man, a forcibly retired bureaucrat who is both cunningly intelligent and disturbingly stupid."

Jefferson Morley, *WP*, Mar. 24, 1997: 33.

Ashton, Frederick

Secret Muses: The Life of Frederick Ashton. Julie Kavanagh. New York: Pantheon, 1997. 647 pp. $35.00.

". . . any scholar who seeks to write about Frederick Ashton will henceforth take this invaluable book as a starting place, and will profit endlessly from the skill and sensitivity with which Ms. Kavanagh evokes the imaginative world of his ballets."

Terry Teachout, *NYTBR*, May 18, 1997: 14–15.

Aston, Lord

Lord Linoleum: Lord Aston, Lancaster and the Rise of the British Oil Cloth and Linoleum Industry. Philip J. Gooderson. Keele, Staffordshire: Keele UP, 1996. 288 pp. £35.

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"Philip S. Gooderson's balanced and readable account, *Lord Linoleum*, rescues for posterity a man about whom posterity would certainly have been kinder if its subject had not lived beyond his alloted three score and ten."

Leslie Hannah, *TLS*, Apr. 4, 1997: 22.

Beauvoir, Simone de

Un amour transatlantique: Lettres à Nelson Algren, 1947–1964. Simone de Beauvoir. Text established, translated from English, and annotated by Sylvie Le Bon de Beauvoir. Paris: Gallimard. 614 pp. FF160.

Since Algren never mastered French, Beauvoir wrote to him in English. Her heir and literary executor has translated these letters, and an unknown woman, free, loving, passionate, hurt at times, emerges from this correspondence. Besides, because her lover did not know Paris, she evokes for him the people (Mouloudji, Greco, Queneau, Prévert, Giacometti, Genet, Cocteau, Colette) and the places where they live. So the book is also a Paris revisited—brilliantly.

Josyane Savigneau, *Le Monde des Livres*, Feb. 28, 1997: 1, 4.

Benchley, Robert

Laughter's Gentle Soul: The Life of Robert Benchley. Billy Altman. New York: Norton, 1997. 382 pp. $30.00.

"Mr. Altman, a magazine journalist, builds on the work of his predecessors, filling in some gaps, providing us with some new information. Unfortunately, the story he tells, though not much different from the one Nathaniel Benchley gave us 40 years ago, is blander and less witty. He identifies no new sources for his biography and asks no new questions of the old ones. We never quite learn what it is about Benchley's style or subjects that made him the most admired humorist of his times."

David Nasaw, *NYTBR*, Apr. 20, 1997: 24.

Blache, Alice Guy

The Memoirs of Alice Guy Blache. Ed. Anthony Slide. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 1996. 208 pp. $32.00.

"As Leon Gaumont's secretary in 1895, Alice Guy found herself ideally positioned to become one of the very first film-makers in the following year—provided (as Gaumont ordered) that her directing did not interfere with her secretarial duties! . . . This vivid, unsentimental insight into the working conditions of early film-making is supplemented by a selection of contemporary articles and a useful filmography."

Sight and Sound 7.5 (May 1997): 35.

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Bogart, Humphrey

Bogart. A. M. Sperber and Eric Lax. New York: Morrow, 1997. 676 pp. $27.50.

Bogart: A Life in Hollywood. Jeffrey Meyers. Boston: A Peter Davison Book/Houghton Mifflin, 1997. 369 pp. $30.00.

"So rich in its research, so compelling in its writing, [*Bogart*] is an absorbing human story that reveals an exact understanding of the motion picture business in the age of Humphrey Bogart. . . . [*Bogart: A Life in Hollywood* is] more interesting than most [Bogart biographies] but helplessly unlucky in coinciding with A. M. Sperber and Eric Lax's book and unable to keep up with their access to waiters, bit-part players, hairdressers, cronies, onlookers, agents and chauffeurs, as well as the big names who knew Bogart."

David Thomson, *LATBR*, Apr. 6, 1997: 3.

"What is missing from these two books is any new perspective on the strangely contradictory life and personality of Humphrey DeForest Bogart, who, though famous for playing tough guys, was born into a life of wealth and social standing."

Jeanine Basinger, *NYTBR*, Apr. 20, 1997: 7.

"About the two biographies: Jeffrey Meyers, who has also written biographies of Wyndham Lewis and Robert Frost, is the better writer. But the Sperber-Lax biography boasts nearly 200 interviews that A. M. Sperber conducted over the last 30 years with people who knew Bogart. Her astonishing passion for detail clears up many puzzles that remain cloudy in the Meyers biography. The Sperber-Lax book may be longer, but it is the livelier of the two."

Robert Bly, *WP*, May 26, 1997: 33.

Briasson, Antoine-Claude, Nicolas-Charles-Joseph Trublet, and Samuel Formey

Correspondance passive de Samuel Formey, Antoine-Claude Briasson et Nicolas-Charles-Joseph Trublet: Lettres adressees a Jean-Henri Samuel Formey (1739-1770). Ed. Martin Fontius, Rolf Geissler, and Jens Haseler. "Correspondances littéraires, érudites, philosophiques, privées ou secrètes" 6.1. Paris, Geneve: Champion Slatkine, 1996. 436 pp.

This volume brings together 73 letters from the bookseller Antoine-Claude Briasson to Jean-Henri-Samuel Formey, written between 1739-1770, addressing in particular the history of the *Encyclopedie*. The 69 letters from the abbot Trublet, written between 1749–1765, are presented by Martin Fontius as exemplary models of the private literary correspondence. The modernization of the spelling and the critical commentaries make this a valuable volume for research.

Ute van Runset, *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France* 97.2 (1997): 331.

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Brunetière, Ferdinand

Connaissez-vous Brunetière? Antoine Compagnon. Paris: Seuil. 288 pp. FF130.

Who indeed remembers this literary tycoon, whose speeches at Columbia University made headlines in the *New York Times* ("Brunetière Scores Zola")? For he exported his antisemitism "in the name of democracy" ("France being a catholic country must be governed by catholics"). This book largely ignores the literary critic in favor of the political partisan, and also in favor of the contrapuntal (and savory) correspondence between the famous antidreyfusard and Flore Singer, née Ratisbonne, a distinguished Jewish woman.

Pierre Lepape, *Le Monde des Livres*, Apr. 18, 1997: 2.

Burke, Kenneth

Kenneth Burke in Greenwich Village: Conversing with the Moderns, 1915–1931. Jack Selzer. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1996. 284 pp. Cloth, $50.00; paper, $19.95.

"Jack Selzer, who teaches English and rhetoric at Pennsylvania State University, argues cogently that Burke's part in the self-styled 'Youngest Generation' of New York's heavy avant-garde merits notice. Burke not only displayed his thinking on esthetic form and function in that period, Mr. Selzer says, but also established himself as a major contributor to modernism."

Renee Tursi, *NYTBR*, Apr. 20, 1997: 21.

Byron, George Gordon, Lord

Byron: The Flawed Angel. Phyllis Grosskurth. Boston: A Peter Davison Book/Houghton Mifflin, 1997. 510 pp. $40.00.

"Ms. Grosskurth's biography is the first full-length life of Byron since Leslie Marchand's magisterial three-volume study, a work that, although published 40 years ago, looked as if it would never be superseded. Perhaps it hasn't been. Ms. Grosskurth is unfailingly gracious about the various debts to Marchand, but what she has produced is superb nonetheless. 'Byron: The Flawed Angel' takes its place immediately as the definitive short study of the poet and will be especially valuable for anyone coming to Byron for the first time."

Terry Castle, *NYTBR*, Apr. 13, 1997: 13.

"The problem lies not simply in Grosskurth's style, but in the banality of reflection to which this style attests. It is difficult to imagine from reading this book why anyone should ever have cared much about Byron, who comes off looking rather stupid."

Simon Jarvis, *TLS*, Apr. 4, 1997: 20–21.

Camus, Albert

Albert Camus: Une vie. Olivier Todd. Paris: Gallimard, 1996. 855 pp. FF180.

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An attractive biography, full of life and truths, very well documented, which offers a much richer portrait of Camus than previous biographies.

Konrad Bieber, *French Review* 70.5 (May 1997): 741–2.

Chambers, Whittaker

Whittaker Chambers: A Biography. Sam Tanenhaus. New York: Random House, 1997. 638 pp. $35.00.

"Sam Tanenhaus has given Chambers the best tribute of all—a firm place in history. His passionate work of scholarship recalls the words that Arthur Koestler wrote upon learning of Chambers's death: 'The witness is gone, the testimony will stand.'"

David Oshinsky, *WP*, Mar. 24, 1997: 34.

Chandler, Raymond

Raymond Chandler: A Biography. Tom Hiney. New York: Atlantic Monthly, 1997. 310 pp. $26.00.

"[Robert] Parker's two additions to the Marlowe canon are distinguished testimony to the hardening cultural grip of Raymond Chandler. The same and more can be said of Tom Hiney's thoughtful and finely rounded biography."

R. W. B. Lewis, *NYTBR*, June 22, 1997: 12–13.

"Hiney has kept his biography to a reasonable length, analyzed his subject's work with precision and perception, and presented a persuasive case that not merely was Chandler a writer of real consequence, he was also 'a good man and an honest one.'"

Jonathan Yardley, *WP* June 2, 1997: 34.

Chaplin, Charlie

Charlie Chaplin and His Times. Kenneth S. Lynn. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997. 604 pp. $35.00.

"Kenneth S. Lynn, who has written well-received studies of Ernest Hemingway, Mark Twain and William Dean Howells, and who is the Arthur O. Lovejoy Professor Emeritus of History at Johns Hopkins University, has produced an enormous, often fascinating, prodigiously researched book that goes off in all directions in search of the man behind the myth. Unfortunately, the readers of 'Charlie Chaplin and His Times' must climb a mountain of footnotes, references, extracts, pocket histories of social and historical convulsions, mini-biographies of famous personages from Mack Sennett to Adolf Hitler, opinions of critics and historians, of friends, enemies, employees and acquaintances, of wives and mistresses, to reach the grave at Vevey, Switzerland, from which, on March 2, 1978, vandals stole Chaplin's coffin."

Andrew Sarris, *NYTBR*, Mar. 30, 1997: 6.

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Chirac, Jacques

Un président très entouré. Anne Fulda. Paris: Grasset. 300 pp. FF118.

Sale temps pour la République. Claude Angeli and Stéphanie Mesnier. Paris: Grasset. 236 pp. FF109.

Le roman d'un président. Nicolas Domenach and Maurice Szafran. Paris: Plon. 320 pp. FF125.

Between Fulda's pure hagiography and Angeli and Mesnier's wholesale indictment, Domenach and Szafran offer a detailed, qualified portrait, rich in testimony and original viewpoints.

Gérard Courtois, *Le Monde des Livres*, Mar. 21, 1997: 6.

Churchill, Winston. See **Roosevelt, Franklin Delano**.

Clemens, Samuel

The Courtship of Olivia Langdon and Mark Twain. Susan K. Harris. New York: Cambridge UP, 1996. 202 pp. $17.95.

"Harris, nimbly interweaving texts (letters, diaries) and contexts, dispels the mystery, bringing back the real Mrs. Twain: A woman of genuine intellectual reach, and a passionate reader in an era where that passion could itself be an art."

The New Yorker, Mar. 31, 1997: 101.

Inventing Mark Twain: The Life of Samuel Langhorn Clemens. Andrew Hoffman. New York: Morrow, 1997. 572 pp. $30.00.

"Mr. Hoffman, a novelist and visiting scholar at Brown University, argues that the jovial, democratic humorist most readers identify as Mark Twain was often just a clown mask for the real-life Clemens, who could be insecure, brooding, even reactionary and racist. Although Mr. Hoffman's book at times overemphasizes Clemens' dark side, it is generally evenhanded and convincing, supported by an imposing body of evidence, some of it never tapped before."

David S. Reynolds, *NYTBR*, Apr. 27, 1997: 20.

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor

The Life of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Rosemary Ashton. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996. 480 pp. £25.

To bring back to life so complex, and at times so elusive, a man as Coleridge—this "stranger or visitor in this world," this mystic in search of a Redeemer, this Hamlet whose extreme sensibility led to insensitive words and actions towards those close to him, and whose tragic need of purity was mixed with an obsessive fear of sin—was by no means easy. Yet it is what Rosemary Ashton achieves in a magisterial portrait.

Denis Bonnecase, *Études Anglaises*, Jan.-Mar. 1997: 100–01.

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Colette, Sidonie Gabrielle

Colette. Claude Francis and Fernande Gontier. Paris: Perrin. 440 pp. FF139.

Extremely rich in details and precisions of all kinds, the book is somehow submerged by an overabundance of information: the minutiae prevail at the expense of the biographical project.

Hugo Marsan, *Le Monde des Livres*, Apr. 25, 1997: 3.

Cook, Frederick, and Robert Peary

Cook & Peary: The Polar Controversy Resolved. Robert M. Bryce. Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole. $50.00.

"Mr. Bryce's zeal to leave no stone unturned (130 pages of footnotes) hurts his book: he sometimes gets mired in too much detail. Nevertheless, he has made a leap forward in resolving the North Pole question."

James Vescovi, *NYTBR*, Apr. 20, 1997: 21.

Cornell, Joseph

Utopia Parkway: The Life and Work of Joseph Cornell. Deborah Solomon. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1996. 426 pp. $30.00.

"... a principal virtue of this biography of the artist is that it challenges in a very authoritative way the received idea of Cornell as merely the timorous recluse, the marginal artist of Utopia Parkway. Ms. Solomon does a thorough job of tracing out his ambivalent but not-so-diffident relationships with major styles of modernist art—from Surrealism and neo-Romanticism through Abstract Expressionism and beyond to Pop Art."

James R. Mellow, *NYTBR*, Mar. 23, 1997: 11–12.

Denes, Magda

Castles Burning: A Child's Life in War. Magda Denes. New York: Norton, 1997. 384 pp. $24.00.

Denes "documents the effects of official German anti-Semitism on the lives of a single family, and [suggests that] family dynamics and individual character are as central to survival—and perhaps not only psychological survival—as any raw fact of history."

Edith Milton, *Women's Review of Books* 14.9 (June 1997): 6–7.

Diderot, Denis

Denis Diderot, alias Frère Tonpla. Laurent Versini. Paris: Hachette, 1996. 240 pp. FF150.

Without particular insight or specific reflection, Professor Versini has written a satisfactory introduction to further in-depth reading.

Bulletin Critique du Livre Français 578 (Nov. 1996): 1964.

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Dooley, Thomas A.

Dr. America: The Lives of Thomas A. Dooley, 1927–1961. James T. Fisher. Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1997. 304 pp. $29.95.

"Fisher's subtle, well-told chronicle of a complex mid-century American life turns out to be a compelling work of social history. And Dooley's short life becomes a mirror to a nation's long struggle to figure out what to do with its great power, how to exert it, and where."

Robert Coles, *WP*, June 2, 1997: 33.

Duchamp, Marcel

Duchamp: A Biography. Calvin Tomkins. New York: Holt, 1996. 550 pp. $35.00.

The Private Worlds of Marcel Duchamp: Desire, Liberation, and the Self in Modern Culture. Jerrold Seigel. Berkeley: U of California P, 1997. 291 pp. Cloth, $34.95; paper, $18.95.

"A New York and *New Yorker* writer, Calvin Tomkins published an admiring sixty-page essay on Duchamp in 1962. . . . The fleshing out of Tomkins's Sixties tribute has produced a readable, well-documented biography of an elusive figure. The book as a whole argues that Duchamp is an exemplary artist who shaped his life more successfully than his art. . . . Tomkins does not hide his sympathies for Duchamp's habits of discretion and restraint. *Duchamp: A Biography* combines a wide knowledge of both figure and ground with a style that usually handles forward-moving narrative as adroitly as analysis of persons and artworks."

Seigel offers not a "biography that follows a peregrine life" but a thematic study of Duchamp's work "to show that his career forms a coherent whole . . . of identifiable and interrelated ideas and impulses, linked to a set of personal themes that persisted throughout his life."

Roger Shattuck, *NYRB*, Mar. 27, 1997: 22.

Einstein, Albert

Albert Einstein: A Biography. Albrecht Folsing. Trans. Ewer Osers. New York: Viking, 1997. 882 pp. $34.95.

"Of the new biographies, the fullest by far is Albrecht Folsing's huge *Albert Einstein*, originally published in German in 1993 and now appearing in English. Folsing's book, while needing clearer scientific explanations, provides a nuanced, nonjudgmental personal portrait, resting firmly on prodigious archival work. *Albert Einstein* allows us to see deeply into Einstein's inner world, to hear his voice, both muttering and proclaiming. . . ."

Alan Lightman, *NYRB*, Apr. 10, 1997: 14.

"With this massive biography, ably translated from the German by Ewer Osers, Albrecht Folsing shows us a man who could be outwardly

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simple, even peasant-like at times, yet remain inwardly shrewd and complex."

Marcia Bartusiak, *WP*, Apr. 14, 1997: 33.

The Quotable Einstein. Ed. Alice Calaprice. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1996. $16.95.

"All of us who lack Einstein's intellectual and spiritual gifts owe a debt of gratitude to Princeton University Press for having humanized him in this innovative way—by demonstrating that if you pick and choose carefully enough, you can make even Einstein seem, however fleetingly, to have been as dishwater-dull as an average man."

Timothy Ferris, *NYTBR*, Apr. 13, 1997: 21.

Farmanfarmaian, Manucher

Blood and Oil: Memoirs of a Persian Prince. Manucher Farmanfarmaian and Roxanne Farmanfarmaian. New York: Random House, 1997. 514 pp. $35.00.

"Throughout a life spent in fine restaurants and imperial anterooms, as well as in danger and despair, Farmanfarmaian sustains his good humor and balance. . . . Yet beyond the insights into oil or the course of modern Persian history, it is the human warmth that is the most memorable feature of this book."

Fred Halliday, *LATBR*, Apr. 27, 1997: 4.

Farrow, Mia

What Falls Away: A Memoir. Mia Farrow. New York: Doubleday, 1997. 370 pp. $16.99.

"Her version of events sounds plausible enough—but it would, wouldn't it? Unfortunately, she also sounds a little loopy. . . . Compulsive reading nonetheless."

Sight and Sound 7.5 (May 1997): 35.

Fitzgerald, Frances Scott

Scottie: The Daughter of . . . The Life of Frances Scott Fitzgerald. Eleanor Lanahan. New York: HarperCollins, 1995. 672 pp. $30.00.

This "is not a great biography. It moves steadily but sometimes ploddingly through the subject's life. There is not much profound analysis. Yet the biography succeeds despite—perhaps even because of—the straightforward simplicity of the approach."

Edward J. Reilly, *Journal of Popular Culture* 30.1 (Summer 1996): 279–80.

Ford, Ford Madox

Ford Madox Ford: A Dual Life. Max Saunders. New York: Oxford UP, 1996. Vol. 1. 632 pp. $55.00. Vol. 2. 696 pp. $49.95.

"Saunders's massive work has quite opposite virtues: it is scholarly, careful, and grinds exceedingly fine. The pulse of Ford's actual life

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often vanishes completely for long stretches; on the other hand, the books are given the primary weight. It is in effect a reference biography, something you will take down in the future to check the plot of that still-unavailable novel, a book difficult to read as one normally reads books; and certainly a biography to put a stop to further Ford biography for quite some time. All the known knowledge—if not all the truth—is here. About the only thing Saunders could have told us about but doesn't is the brand of beer which Ford surprisingly helped advertise toward the end of his life."

Julian Barnes, *NYRB*, Jan. 9, 1997: 23.

Formey, Samuel. See **Briasson, Antoine-Claude.**

Foster, Stephen

Doo-Dah! Stephen Foster and the Rise of American Popular Culture. Ken Emerson. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997. 400 pp. $30.00.

"At least Emerson wasn't tempted to write one of those month-by-month play-by-plays that turn biography into brick-laying. Instead, he breaches scholarly decorum by finding similarities between Foster's life and the lives of his contemporaries. . . . As a result, Emerson's biography doubles as a cultural history. Emerson lays out this complex story with grace, originality, dispatch and a level of insight that owes much to his experience as a rock critic."

Robert Christgau, *LATBR* May 4, 1997: 4.

"Emerson keeps emphasizing the unsettling divisions in Foster's life and work: the way he veered from melancholy to ebullience, shrewdness to near-hopeless naïveté, conservative to progressive impulses. His own book keeps veering from historical minutiae to grand metaphorical assertion. It is not that both don't belong there; it's that for all the book's virtues, they're a little out of control. The intentions are exactly right. The proportions are slightly off."

Margo Jefferson, *NYTBR*, June 1, 1997: 5.

Franklin, Benjamin

Benjamin Franklin, Politician: The Mask and the Man. Francis Jennings. New York: Norton, 1996. 240 pp. $27.50.

". . . Jennings has quarried the volumes of the Franklin papers with immense skill and energy, and his approach is entirely refreshing."

Hugh Broyan, *TLS*, Apr. 18, 1997: 28.

Gladstone, William

Gladstone: A Biography. Roy Jenkins. New York: Random House, 1997. 698 pp. $35.00.

"The book is more than just stylish, however. Gladstone was in many ways the grandfather of modern liberalism to whom Jenkins, as a British liberal, wishes to pay tribute. It is a worthy tribute based on

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prodigious research. Gladstone's diaries alone comprise fourteen volumes and his papers in the British library amount to seventy-five volumes. Out of this mountain of facts, Jenkins has brought to life a complex and often contradictory Victorian hero."

Ian Buruma, *NYRB*, Mar. 27, 1997: 10.

Goyen, William

Six Femmes. William Goyen. Trans. by Patrice Repusseau. Paris and Arles: Actes Sud. 112 pp. FF58.

Better praised in France than in his own country [US] (perhaps thanks to admirable translators like M. E. Coindreau yesterday and Patrice Repusseau today), the author of *The House of Breath* gives in this gallery of portraits (of Frieda Lawrence, Dorothy Brett, Mabel Dodge Luhan, Millicent Rogers, Katherine Anne Porter, and Margo Jones) some harsh, fierce, ruthless elements for the biography of these six women.

Florence Noiville, *Le Monde des Livres*, Apr. 4, 1997: 4.

Grant, Cary

Cary Grant: A Class Apart. Graham McCann. New York: Columbia UP, 1997. 352 pp. $24.95.

Cary Grant: Dark Angel. Geoffrey Wansell. New York: Arcade, 1997. $29.95.

"I praise McCann for his research but not for his approach to his subject or for his insights into Grant's character. . . . As for McCann's insights, the best of them are borrowed—with a scholar's conscientious attributions—from other writers. But perhaps the oddest thing about the book is his gingerliness in respect to Grant's sexual disposition. In prim old-maidish fashion, McCann cannot bear Grant to be anything but ruggedly heterosexual, and he goes to great lengths to derogate anyone who dares to suggest otherwise."

Wansell's book "is a coffee-table in size and is crammed with irresistible photographs. Mr. Wansell wrote a biography of Grant some fifteen years ago, at a time, when according to his preface, 'I don't think I appreciated fully the marvelous subtlety of his talent.' This, his second attempt, also a failure of appreciation, boasts a title that is as maladroit as McCann's subtitle, and that, except for the color of Grant's hair during the last fifty or sixty years of his life, proves to have little connection with the text."

Brendan Gill, *The New Yorker*, June 2, 1997: 84–8.

"What book could do justice to Cary Grant, the movie star who personified romance, sophistication and gentlemanly grace? In most ways, Graham McCann's well-researched 'Cary Grant: A Class Apart' does, and gratifyingly well. . . .

There are pictures galore in Geoffrey Wansell's 'Cary Grant: Dark Angel,' but the text is superficial. Mr. Wansell faults his 1984 biography of Grant, 'Haunted Idol' because 'it brought the dark side of his

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character to life, certainly, but did not quite balance it with proper tribute to his incandescent screen presence.' Perhaps a third one will be the charm."

Andrea Higbie, *NYTBR*, Apr. 13, 1997: 21.

Gravano, Sammy

Underboss: Sammy the Bull Gravano's Story of Life in the Mafia. Peter Maas. New York: HarperCollins, 1997. 308 pp. $25.00.

"In Mr. Maas, whose previous books include 'The Valachi Papers' and 'Serpico,' [Gravano] has found the perfect person to tell his story and let the spotlight shine on Sammy Gravano for once. Probably half the book is in his voice. He can be funny, and incisive, and frank, and horribly cold. Mr. Maas fills in the larger picture, placing this one thug in context, showing us the landscape in which this particular Sammy runs. The result is a terrific and, I think, important book."

Donald Westlake, *NYTBR*, May 18, 1997: 10.

Guevara, Ernesto "Che"

Che Guevara: A Revolutionary Life. John Lee Anderson. New York: Grove, 1997. 814 pp. $35.00.

It is "an excellent (if too long) new biography. . . . It is unlikely that after Anderson's exhaustive contribution, much more will be learned about Guevara."

Tad Szulc, *LATBR*, May 4, 1997: 3–4.

"Mr. Anderson does a masterly job in evoking Che's complex character, in separating the man from the myth and in describing the critical role Che played in one of the darkest periods of the cold war. Ultimately, however, the strength of his book is in the wealth of detail."

Peter Canby, *NYTBR*, May 18, 1997: 8.

"Clearly John Anderson is a journalist possessed. I can understand and sympathize with his obsession to get everything down and get it right, yet as a reader I'm not convinced we need to know the trajectory of every bullet fired or the origins of every guerrilla alliance. There's a little too much inside beisbol here. On occasion I felt I was reading Che's life in real time."

Tom Miller, *WP*, May 12, 1997: 37.

Hemingway, Ernest

Hemingway: The 1930s. Michael Reynolds. New York: Norton, 1997. 384 pp. $30.00.

"'Hemingway: The 1930s' is a good account of the 10 years of Ernest Hemingway's life in which his public image took shape and his writing skills began to mature. However, Michael Reynolds perpetuates the popular myth that by knowing more about Hemingway's life we know more about his novels."

Keith Dixon, *NYTBR*, June 17, 1997: 23.

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Huxley, Thomas

Huxley: Evolution's High Priest. Adrian Desmond. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1997. 370 pp. $20.00.

"Nobody writes scientific biography like Adrian Desmond, and this account of Huxley's Progress, from Ealing, via Evolution, to Eastbourne, is his best so far."

Roy Porter, *TLS*, Apr. 4, 1997: 21–22.

Jackson, Thomas J. "Stonewall"

Stonewall Jackson: The Man, the Soldier, the Legend. James I. Robertson, Jr. New York: Macmillan, 1996. 950 pp. $40.00.

"James I. Robertson Jr., Alumni Distinguished Professor of History at Virginia Tech, has spent a career in the highest echelon of Civil War Historians. In that time he has come to know Jackson perhaps better than anyone who did not know the general in his own time. Robertson has gathered virtually everything he could find about the brilliant Confederate commander and put it in this book. It is a long-awaited major event in Civil War literature."

John C. Waugh, *WP*, Mar. 31, 1997: 33.

James, Henry and William

William and Henry James: Selected Letters. Ed. Ignas K. Skrupskelis and Elizabeth M. Berkeley. Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 1997. 608 pp. $39.95.

"... in the University Press of Virginia's one-volume compendium of its previously issued three volumes of the brother's correspondence, their binding affection outweighs such disparities and the mild rivalry biographers have so liked to flag."

Renee Tursi, *NYTBR*, June 1, 1997: 21.

Jefferson, Thomas

American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson. Joseph J. Ellis. New York: Knopf, 1997. 365 pp. $26.00.

"Anyone fascinated by the Jefferson legend would do well to read Ellis's extraordinary book. It may not overturn the legend—no sophisticated historian really wants to destroy myths, in view of the underlying truth in most of them—yet it must certainly modify and deepen the way we think about this one. And there are ways and ways to do such thinking. Thomas Jefferson himself, as Ellis has shown, was a master of denial and self-deception. But such mechanisms were hardly unique to Jefferson."

Eric L. McKitrick, *NYRB*, Apr. 24, 1997: 4.

"Mr. Ellis, a professor of history at Mount Holyoke College, is a remarkably clear writer, mercifully free of both groveling and the spirit of attack that have dominated the subject in the past. As a biographer

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of John Adams, he is well suited to this mission. . . . 'American Sphinx' is fresh and uncluttered but rich in historical significance."

Brent Staples, *NYTBR*, Mar. 23, 1997: 7.

"Ellis is one of the ever-dwindling number of scholars who believe that it is possible to know Jefferson or any historical figure, 'as he really was.' By examining the 'bedrock Jeffersonian values that determined the shape of the political vision he projected so successfully onto his world,' Ellis believes we can better understand the relationship between the historical Jefferson and the Jeffersonian beliefs of the present. And to an admirable degree Ellis succeeds in this daunting task."

Brendan McConville, *WP*, Mar. 10, 1997: 36.

The Long Affair: Thomas Jefferson and the French Revolution, 1785–1800. Conor Cruise O'Brien. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1996. 367 pp. $29.95.

"Because Jefferson the prophet has become so important to America's civil religion, traditional historians, O'Brien says, have sought to make a sacred icon of the man and have blurred and distorted the real, historical Jefferson. Not only was Jefferson a slaveholding racist who wished to send all blacks out of the country, but he was an extreme fanatic who believed that any number of people could be killed for the sake of a cause. Although O'Brien admits that Jefferson didn't often say fanatical things, he said enough to be a prophet. . . . So it goes, one outrageous statement after another, all designed to remove Jefferson from America's civil religion and the pantheon of American heroes. One would like to believe much of this book is written tongue in cheek, with some sense of irony and compassion for a country that has as its principal spokesman for its beliefs in democracy and equality a slaveholding racist aristocrat. But no: O'Brien is too enraged and engaged for any humor or ironic lightness of touch. Because he takes ideas seriously and considers them equivalent of action, he puts more emphasis on what Jefferson said than on what he actually did."

Gordon S. Wood, *NYRB*, Feb. 20, 1997: 23.

John, Augustus

Augustus John: The New Biography. Michael Holroyd. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1996. 715 pp. $40.00.

"If biography is now the reigning genre in Britain, Holroyd is its king. He can be forgiven then for reissuing this addition with 'The New Biography' plainly announced on the jacket, when in fact it is not very new; anyone owning an earlier edition need not buy this one (but do hurry to enjoy rereading the old one). In his preface Holroyd explains how he acquired new material which persuaded him to make revisions and additions, but in fact the changes are peripheral. The new version remains the same length; in order to expand notes and

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appendices, some small flourishes have been cut—a pity in a way, because Holroyd cannot write badly."

Rosemary Dinnage, *NYRB*, Mar. 6, 1997: 24.

Jesenska, Milena

Kafka, Love and Courage: The Life of Milena Jesenska. Mary Hockaday. Woodstock, NY: Overlook, 1997. 225 pp. $26.95.

"The test of whether this biography succeeds is whether it overcomes its title. Fortunately, it passes with flying colors. . . . Mary Hockaday . . . is deft at evoking both time and place and at placing Jesenska's life in its social and historical context, but her main concern is with the life itself and the idea of the new woman it exemplifies."

Michael Henry Heim, *LATBR*, Apr. 27, 1997: 10.

Kent, Bobby

Bully: Does Anyone Deserve to Die? Jim Schutze. New York: Morrow, 1997. 289 pp. $23.00.

"In 'Bully,' Jim Schutze, the Dallas bureau chief for The Houston Chronicle, has written a deeply disturbing book, an indictment of suburban values and of an aimless, violent, middle-class youth culture that is depraved because it is morally—not economically—deprived."

Patricia Fieldsteel, *NYTBR*, Mar. 23, 1997: 19.

Lacan, Jacques

Jacques Lacan. Elisabeth Roudinesco. New York: Columbia UP, 1997. 574 pp. $36.95.

"First published in France in 1993, Elisabeth Roudinesco's definitive biography, 'Jacques Lacan,' is neither hagiographic nor vindictive; Ms. Roudinesco, a psychoanalyst based in Paris and the author of two previous books on the history of psychoanalysts in France, employs the wise strategy of the preemptive strike—she acknowledges Lacan's personal absurdity and literary extravagance while simultaneously showing why and how he matters."

Perry Meisel, *NYTBR*, Apr. 13, 1997: 12.

Lamartine, Alphonse de

Correspondance inédite d'Alphonse de Lamartine. Edited and annotated by Christian Croisille. Vol. 2: *Feb. 1848–1866*. Cahiers d'études sur les correspondances du XIX siècle, no 6. Paris: Clermont-Ferrand, 1996. 316 pp.

This volume contains more than 300 previously unpublished letters, including those of Lamartine's friend and creditor, Philibert Beaune, and of his secretary, Alfred Dumesnil. It is a useful contribution to the biographical study of these least well-known years of Lamartine's life.

Patrick Berthier, *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France* 97.2 (1997): 336.

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Langdon, Olivia. See **Clemens, Samuel.**

Luce, Clare Booth

Rage for Fame: The Ascent of Clare Boothe Luce. Sylvia Jukes Morris. New York: Random House, 1997. 561 pp. $30.00.

"Whatever wonders are yet to come, Sylvia Jukes Morris has written a model biography of a woman who, if born a man, could easily have been a President, for what that's worth these days: a cool billion, I believe."

Gore Vidal, *The New Yorker*, May 26, 1997: 70–76.

"This volume, which brings the story up to her election to Congress, covers only Luce's ascent; the next volume will presumably take her downhill. As with the boss-hating confidante, one can only hope that someday Ms. Morris will find more agreeable work."

Judith Martin, *NYTBR*, June 8, 1997: 11.

Makanya, Katie

The Calling of Katie Makanya: A Memoir of South Africa. Margaret McCord. New York: Wiley, 1995. 252 pp. $24.95.

"The book is a quietly powerful memoir told as unassumingly as Katie Makanya lived, offering an intimate perspective on South Africa's apartheid history."

Mary Ellen Sullivan, *NYTBR*, Apr. 6, 1997: 20.

Malraux, André

André Malraux: A Biography. Curtis Cate. London: Hutchinson, 1997. 451 pp. £15.00.

"Cate brings both useful perspective and new information to the life of a writer whose career elicited as much controversy as applause.... All Malraux's performances, literary and political, were uneven, but Cate's steadfast common sense allows us to understand this personality of consistent inconsistency—part Peck's Bad Boy, part Joan of Arc."

The New Yorker, June 2, 1997: 89.

"Although his patient documentation is entertaining and enlightening in many ways, by neglecting to describe more fully the social, cultural, and intellectual contexts that shaped Malraux's life and that he helped transform, Mr. Cate has missed the chance to show how his subject continues to be so relevant to France today."

Christine Schwartz Hartley, *NYTBR*, May 25, 1997: 17.

Marion, Frances

Without Lying Down: Frances Marion and the Powerful Women of Early Hollywood. Cari Beauchamp. New York: A Lisa Drew Book/ Scribner's, 1997. 475 pp. $30.00.

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"This richly researched excavation of complex lives—an almost scholarly tome (as scholarly as good movie gossip gets)—reaches no overarching conclusions and has (thankfully) little dogma and no real axes to grind. But it is a revelation to those of us who came later."

Lynda Obst, *NYTBR*, May 18, 1997: 6.

Marshall, John

John Marshall: Definer of a Nation. Jean Edward Smith. New York: Holt, 1996. 736 pp. $35.00.

"Jean Edward Smith has written the exemplary life of a great man. I hope some modern judges read it."

Mortimer Sellers, *WP*, Mar. 31, 1997: 33–4.

Meitner, Lise

Lise Meitner: A Life in Physics. Ruth Lewin Sime. Berkeley: U of California P, 1996. 526 pp. $34.95.

"To illustrate the city's intellectual ferment, Meitner's new biographer Ruth Sime mentions Sigmund Freud, Viktor Adler, and Theodor Herzl, but neither Adler, a socialist leader, nor Herzl, a founder of Zionism, contributed much to the life of Vienna itself. She fails to mention Gustav Mahler or Arthur Schnitzler, or Otto Wagner and Adolf Loos, the two great pioneers of modern architecture, or Josef Hoffmann and Koloman Moser, who founded the Wiener Werkstatte, the group that largely originated modern design. . . . Sime's accounts of Meitner's and her colleagues' scientific works are accurate, readable and intelligible to anyone with a rudimentary knowledge of physics and chemistry. She gives a vivid picture of the life and personality of this remarkable woman."

M. F. Perutz, *NYRB*, Feb. 20, 1997: 39.

Melville, Herman

Herman Melville: A Biography. Vol. 1. *1819–1851*. Hershel Parker. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996. 941 pp. $39.95.

"Parker's big book (unfortunately, without annotation) is full of footnote-sized discoveries. In sum, they add considerably to our knowledge of the stored memories that congregate in Melville's art. But as Melville put it in *Moby Dick*, 'to produce a mighty book, you must choose a mighty theme,' and there is no grand theme here—only a reductive and overdetermining one: at the root of every mood and motivation Parker finds sexual craving. It does not take long before the ubiquity of the theme discredits it even when it is apt. . . . Parker's biography is written with love and devotion. There is virtually nothing known about Melville (if by knowledge we mean such matters of factual history as his travels, reading, relations with patrons and publishers, practices of composition and revision, and the like) that this formidable book does not contain."

Andrew Delbanco, *NYRB*, May 15, 1997: 18.

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Milne, David B.

Painting Place: The Life and Work of David B. Milne. David P. Silcox. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1996. 423 pp.

"*Painting Place* simultaneously sets Milne's extraordinary achievements in relevant artistic, historical, and personal contexts. . . . It is a magnificent contribution."

Tom Gerry, *Queen's Quarterly*, Spring 1997: 137–39.

Milton, John

Eden Renewed: The Public and Private Life of John Milton. Peter Levi. New York: St. Martin's, 1997. 336 pp. $27.95.

This book "is (in spite of its subtitle) an old-fashioned literary biography." Levi "is an author whose attachment to English literature has been shaped by the poetry of Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton, and who sets out to justify the timeless perfection of a poem like 'Paradise Lost' for his reader."

Lisa Jardine, *LATBR*, Apr. 27, 1997: 9.

Mitford, Nancy

The Letters of Nancy Mitford and Evelyn Waugh. Ed. Charlotte Mosley. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1996. 527 pp. $40.00.

"In this splendidly entertaining, extravagantly funny, and ultimately sobering volume, Mosley, through mordant use of footnotes, has pulled off a feat equal to the best work of her subjects: a book that for all its fits of laughter is really a cogent, minutely observed social history."

The New Yorker, May 19, 1996: 95.

"The morose, blimpish Waugh, the cheerful, teasing Francophile Mitford—an odd couple but a pair of brilliantly funny correspondents. Just now this collection of their letters looks like the most entertaining book of the year."

Michael Dirda, *WP* Apr. 28, 1997: 33.

Moore, Dudley

The Authorized Biography of Dudley Moore. Barbra Paskin. London: Sidgwick & Jackson. 470 pp. £16.99.

"In Paskin's account, clubfooted young Dudley suffers maternal rejection and thereafter seeks validation in nubile bodies and fame. The author's bleeding-heart tone is often unbearable, despite her evident sincerity."

Sight and Sound 7.5 (May 1997): 35.

Muhammad, Elijah

An Original Man: The Life and Times of Elijah Muhammad. Claude Andrew Clegg III. New York: St. Martin's, 1997. 377 pp. $25.95.

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"Aside from relatively minor omissions like Muhammad's brief membership in the black nationalist Garvey Movement, Clegg's detailed explication of Muhammad's life is nearly flawless. Anyone seeking to understand the enduring significance of the Nation of Islam, or the rising political stock of Louis Farrakhan, should begin by reading this biography."

William Jelani Cobb, *WP* Apr. 21, 1997: 37.

Nazimova, Alla

Nazimova: A Biography. Gavin Lambert. New York: Knopf, 1997. 420 pp. $32.50.

"How in four years she went from being an unknown actress who spoke no English to an American star for whom the Schuberts named a theatre is an amazing tale and Gavin Lambert, in 'Nazimova,' a gracefully written, highly entertaining, surprisingly poignant biography, makes the most of it. The author of a biography of Norma Shearer (among many other works of fact and fiction set in Hollywood), Mr. Lambert charts Nazimova's up-and-down career and squishy private life."

Arthur Lowe, NYTBR, Apr. 27, 1997: 12.

Nicholas, Tsar

A Lifelong Passion, Nicholas & Alexandra: Their Own Story. Ed. Sergei Mironeko and Andrei Maylunas. Trans. Darya Galy. New York: Doubleday, 1997. 667 pp. $35.00.

"Edited by Sergei Mironeko, director of the Russian State Archive, and Andrei Maylunas, a Russian-born émigré writer and historian, this collection adds little to the oft-told tale encompassing the passionate love between Nicholas and Alexandra, the sorrow engendered by their son's hemophilia and the disastrous influence of the dissolute Rasputin. The documents do, however, offer fresh perspectives on the relationship between Nicholas's character and his ineffectual performance as tsar."

Susan Jacoby, *WP*, May 15, 1997: 34.

Nicolle, Charles, and George Duhamel

Entretiens d'humanistes: correspondance de Charles Nicolle et Georges Duhamel, 1922–1936. Ed. Jean-Jacques Hueber. Pref. Jean Bernard. Collection de la Société de l'Histoire de Normandie. Rouen: Academie des Sciences, Belles Lettres et Arts de Rouen, Vol. 69, 1996. 421 pp. FF220.

This volume contains more than 300 letters, written during a period of fourteen years characterized by intense scientific, philosophical, and literary activity. An important volume for universities and individuals alike.

Richard J. Bourcier, *French Review* 70.6 (June 1997): 931–2.

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Noriega, Manuel

America's Prisoner: The Memoirs of Manuel Noriega. Manuel Noriega and Peter Eisner. New York: Random House, 1997. 294 pp. $25.00.

"'America's Prisoner' reads like a list of well-documented complaints, sans reflection, sans intimacy, sans the personal. . . . This book is Noriega's attempt to set the record straight and to attach (figuratively speaking) electrodes to sensitive parts of George Bush's anatomy. . . . The pen is mightier than the sword, but can it rewrite history? Not in this account."

Rosalyn Drexler, *LATBR*, May 4, 1997: 14.

Ovitz, Michael

Ovitz: The Inside Story of Hollywood's Most Controversial Power Broker. Robert Slater. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1997. 360 pp. $22.95.

"... Mr. Slater has done himself and Mr. Ovitz a disservice by failing to write a more balanced book about this complex and charismatic mogul—one who has left a trail of very powerful enemies, like David Geffen, Ray Stark and Lew Wasserman, but who also transformed the talent agency business. Mr. Ovitz remains a subject of fascination in Los Angeles and, lately, New York, where he has an apartment and is increasingly visible in financial and publishing circles."

Bernard Weintraub, *NYTBR*, June 8, 1997: 9.

Peary, Robert. See **Cook, Frederick**.

Percy, Walker

Walker Percy: A Life. Patrick Samway. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1997. 506 pp. $35.00.

Samway "manages to do quite well. He writes a lucid suggestive prose; he steps back occasionally to take stock, to speculate; and, very important, he is not reluctant to enter the narrative and tell of his connection to Percy and his family, a 12-year friendship."

Robert Coles, *NYTBR*, June 8, 1997: 17.

Picasso, Pablo

A Life of Picasso. Vol. 2. *1907–1917.* John Richardson with Marilyn McCully. New York: Random House, 1996. 500 pp. $55.00.

"That Richardson never intended definitive status for his biography—whatever the word might mean in such a context—is clear to anyone who has bothered to read the note on 'Principal Sources' in Volume One. Not all collections of papers can be consulted, and some of the items in the Picasso archive itself are yet to be declassified. The interest in Richardson's book is in any case a personal one. When Richardson was living with Douglas Cooper in the 1950s, he got to know many of the principal actors in this story, including Picasso."

James Fenton, *NYRB*, Feb. 6, 1997: 18.

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Poulsen, Kevin

The Watchman: The Twisted Life and Crimes of Serial Hacker Kevin Poulsen. Jonathan Littman. Boston: Little, Brown, 1997. 289 pp. $24.00.

"Jonathan Littman's account of Kevin Poulsen, a young man who once worked as a programmer for a military contractor and went on to become the F.B.I's most wanted computer hacker, reads like a cat-and-mouse-with-keyboards thriller. 'The Watchman' is a guided tour through the subculture of the 'phreaks'—hackers obsessed with tapping into the power of the telephone company."

J. D. Biersdorfer, *NYTBR*, Mar. 30, 1997: 17.

Pyle, Ernie

Ernie Pyle's War: America's Eyewitness to World War II. James Tobin. New York: Free Press, 1997. 312 pp. $25.00.

"This is the portrait of a complex, enormously gifted but tortured writer, entrapped and ultimately driven to death by a sense of obligation to the image he inadvertently created of himself. It is undoubtedly the best biography of Ernie Pyle ever written, but it is much more; few books about combat journalism have so vividly depicted the fascinating interaction between war correspondents, soldiers and the folks back home."

Malcolm W. Browne, *NYTBR*, June 8, 1997: 34.

Rabin, Yitzhak

Rabin: Our Life, His Legacy. Leah Rabin. New York: Putnam's, 1997. 320 pp. $24.95.

"Though other books, including Rabin's own 1979 memoirs, provide a fuller account of his military and political career, Mrs. Rabin has stories to tell that belong to her alone. The history of her own family, for example, is fascinating. . . . Then there are her accounts of personal encounters. . . ."

David B. Green, *NYTBR*, Apr. 20, 1997: 22.

"It is Rabin lite, and it jars against the memory of the gruff, profane and gutsy leader we know from other portraits."

Glenn Frankel, *WP*, Apr. 21, 1997: 36.

Rizzoli, A. G.

A. G. Rizzoli: Architect of Magnificent Visions. Jo Farb Hernandez, John Beardsley, and Roger Cardinal. New York: Abrams/San Diego Museum of Art, 1997. $35.00.

"The essays included here convey what is known of his life and relate his work to the history of imaginary architecture, while the pictures call you back again and again."

The New Yorker, May 12, 1997: 101.

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Rombauer, Irma and Marion

Stand Facing the Stove: The Story of the Women Who Gave America The Joy of Cooking. Anne Mendelson. New York: Holt, 1996. 474 pp. $29.95.

"Their biographer, Anne Mendelson, a journalist and food writer, has placed the Rombauer family story and the book that made theirs a household name in a wider social and culinary context. In addition to the dramatic publishing history of an American classic, 'The Joy of Cooking,' she has given a history and critique of cookbook and food writing as well as of public attitudes toward food."

Ruth Adams Bronz, *NYTBR*, Mar. 23, 1997: 6.

Roosevelt, Franklin Delano

FDR and the Creation of the U.N. Townsend Hoopes and Douglas Brinkley. New Haven: Yale UP, 1997. 287 pp. $30.00.

"By examining the origins of the United Nations in 'FDR and the Creation of the U.N.,' Townsend Hoopes, a former Defense Department official, and Douglas Brinkley, a biographer and historian, reveal a great deal about the problems the organization faces today and why the chances for reform are problematic. This is a story that might easily have fallen victim to tedium, but by using Roosevelt as their vehicle, the authors give their narrative energy and a necessary focus."

Rudy Abramson, *NYTBR*, Apr. 20, 1997: 17.

Forged in War: Roosevelt, Churchill, and the Second World War. Warren F. Kimball. New York: Morrow, 1997. 422 pp. $25.00.

"Mr. Kimball's is the latest work on the alliance; it may be the conclusive one."

Kenneth Harris, *NYTBR*, Apr. 27, 1997: 30.

Rothschild, Meyer

Founder: A Portrait of the First Rothschild and His Times. Amos Elon. New York: Viking, 1996. 208 pp. $24.95.

"Amos Elon's biography of Meyer Amschel Rothschild, the founder of the banking empire, and Fritz Backhaus's article in the exhibition's catalog on Rothschild and his sons suffer from a common weakness: their main character in not very interesting. This is not their fault. There is not much available personal information about him: no diary that reveals early dreams and ambitions or reactions to success or disappointment, no letters to friends or sweethearts, no reliable eyewitness descriptions of him in contact with other people, not even a painting or drawing to show what he looked like. We see him only at work, making money, and although both authors tell us how it was done, neither makes it very exciting. Instead they concentrate on the world in which this shadowy figure grew up, and, particularly in Elon's book, this is a fascinating story."

Gordon A. Craig, *NYRB*, Jan. 9, 1997: 37.

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Saint-Laurent, Yves

Yves Saint-Laurent: A Biography. Alice Rawsthorn. London: HarperCollins, 1996. 405 pp. £20.

"A well researched study of the business of St. Laurent by an author who has a professional interest in design and was formerly on the Paris staff of the Financial Times. . . . It is not an insiders account" but the author interviews the key people.

Patrick Marnham, *TLS*, Mar. 14, 1997.

Saint-Pierre, Catherine de

Lettres de Catherine de Saint-Pierre a son frère Bernardin. Lieve Spaas. Pref. Arlette Farge, Paris: Éditions de L'Harmattan, "Bibliothèque du féminisme," 1996. 222 pp.

Spaas tries to recreate the life of Catherine de Saint-Pierre based on the letters she wrote to her brother, Bernardin. Had it not been for Bernardin's habit of keeping everything, Catherine, like many women of her time, would have remained voiceless. Spaas also tries to situate these letters in the political, social, and juridical context of the time.

Malcolm Cook, *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France* 97.2 (1997): 332–3.

Sarton, May

May Sarton: A Biography. Margot Peters. New York: Knopf, 1997. 452 pp. $30.00.

"Peters shows with devastating precision, that, contrary to the wise-woman persona Sarton cultivated in old age (which brought her throngs of admirers), she was often monstrously selfish, hurtful to those who loved her, and a sexual predator who wouldn't take no for an answer."

The New Yorker, June 2, 1997: 89.

"The usual assumption among literary biographers, I think, is that if one has chosen to invest a number of years in researching and making sense of a writer's life, then the worth of the work is beyond question, if the work itself is not beyond criticism.

But Margot Peters is constantly pointing out May Sarton's fondness for cliché, her flatness, her tendency to wax sentimental. If only May had tried harder, Ms. Peters frequently implies, she could have been a much better writer."

Richard Howard, *NYTBR*, Apr. 6, 1997: 9.

"Peters undertakes the task of sifting through [Sarton's] self-promotion in an effort to assess the woman and the writer candidly. She does this judiciously, offering astute readings of Sarton's work [in this] finely balanced biography."

Brenda Wineapple, *Women's Review of Books* 14.8 (May 1997): 12–13.

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Schuyler, James

The Diary of James Schuyler. Ed. Nathan Kernan. Santa Rosa, CA: Black Sparrow, 1997. 320 pp. Cloth, $27.50; paper, $15.00.

"There are two ways to read this carefully edited volume: First, as a devastating account by a talented writer, beginning in his 44th year, of historically observed and unresisted decline into mental illness and physical dissolution, sustained until his death in 1991 at the age of 67, by many friends and physicians increasingly helpless to control his experience on any 'normal' scale. Second, as the shadow narrative of an achieved œuvre, filled with details of the poet's reading; his minute perceptions of nature, cities and people; and his inveterately resourceful response to the demands of a tough-minded moral vision."

Richard Howard, *NYTBR*, Apr. 20, 1997: 18.

Schwartz, Laurent

Un mathématicien aux prises avec le siècle. Laurent Schwartz. Paris: Odile Jacob. 528 pp. FF160.

A mathematician of international repute and Fields medalist, Laurent Schwartz is not only a scientist but also a citizen: he has constantly supported the struggles of the Third World (Algeria, Afghanistan, Vietnam), and more generally fought for the rights of man—with mixed success, he rather bitterly admits in his autobiography.

Nicolas Weill, *Le Monde des Livres*, Mar. 21, 1997: 1, 9.

Sévigné, Marquise de

Madame de Sévigné: Mère passion. Anne Bernet. Paris: Perrin, 1996. 396 pp. FF145.

For Anne Bernet, passion is the keyword to Madame de Sévigné's personality (and to the Rabutins at large). Bernet might have added "gaiety," of the open and healthy kind. There are no great discoveries in this alert book. One regrets the complete absence in the bibliography of foreign works (especially of some excellent American studies).

Bulletin Critique du Livre Français 578 (Nov. 1996): 1961.

Sorge, Richard

Stalin's Spy: Richard Sorge and the Tokyo Espionage Ring. Robert Whymant. London: Tauris, 1996. 368 pp. £25.

Richard Sorge is admittedly one of the most famous spies of the Second World War. Using hitherto unpublished Russian and German documents, Robert Whymant gives life again to a many faceted man, at once idealist and pitiless, womanizer and solitary, and tormented to the end.

Philippe Pons, *Le Monde des Livres*, Apr. 18, 1997: 2.

Spielberg, Steven

Steven Spielberg: A Biography. Joseph McBride. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997. 528 pp. $30.00.

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Steven Spielberg: The Unauthorized Biography. John Baxter. New York: HarperCollins, 1996. 457 pp. $25.00.

McBride "has given us an exemplary portrait of the artist as movie-making machine, as close to an authoritative book on Mr. Spielberg's work as is possible at this point. Mr. McBride is less successful in knitting Spielberg's professional life to his personal one. . . .

Compared to Mr. McBride's work, Mr. Baxter's is no more than serviceable. It tells many of the same stories but less persuasively, and it has the added handicap of being constructed mainly from secondary sources and a comparatively scant dozen or so fresh interviews. Mr. Baxter's sentences are often more felicitous than Mr. McBride's, and he is more diligent in tracking his subject's private life, but his book is puzzlingly devoid of respect for its subject, or, it often seems, even interest in him."

Shawn Levy, *NYTBR*, June 15, 1997: 24.

Stendhal, Henri

Stendhal: Correspondance inédite de Stendhal, consul de France dans les états romains. Ed. Victor Del Litto. Bibliothèque du voyage en Italie 45. Geneve: Slatkine, 1994. 226 pp.

"Edited by one of the most prominent Stendhalians of our time, the previously unpublished letters in this volume date from Stendhal's service as consul in Civitavecchia from 1831 to 1841." Because of typographical errors in several of the letters as well as in the introduction and notes, the reviewer recommends that those wanting to use this material for research purposes consult the original letters. "The volume itself, as it stands, will hold little interest for any but the most devoted of the 'happy few.'"

John T. Booker, *French Review* 70.6 (June 1997): 926–7.

Streisand, Barbra

Streisand: A Biography. Anne Edwards. Boston: Little, Brown, 1997. 600 pp. $24.95.

"As deeply admiring of its subject as Ms. Streisand herself tends to be, 'Streisand: A Biography' raises only one question: Why didn't she authorize it?"

Daniel Mendelsohn, *NYTBR*, Apr. 27, 1997: 15–16.

Tallchief, Maria

Maria Tallchief: America's Prima Ballerina. Maria Tallchief with Larry Kaplan. New York: Holt, 1997. 334 pp. $27.50.

"This engagingly written story of Tallchief's life as a ballerina" suggests "the complexities of class, gender, dance and American Indian identity" even when "it insists that these questions are best kept apart."

Jacqueline Shea Murphy, *Women's Review of Books* 14.9 (June 1997): 18–19.

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Taylor, Frederick Winslow

The One Best Way: Frederick Winslow Taylor and the Enigma of Efficiency. Robert Kanigel. New York: Viking, 1997. 676 pp. $34.95.

"'The One Best Way' could have been an important book, but it is flawed by its very profuseness. There is very little evidence of efficiency in its 676 pages, which is unfortunate because there is a splendid 200-page book buried somewhere within it."

Welford W. Wilms, *LATBR*, June 1, 1997: 6.

This "richly detailed biography . . . shows how much drama there was in the mundane when Taylor was making it the stuff of a new 'science' of efficiency. . . . Mr. Kanigel is an award-winning science writer, but his prose could use an infusion of efficiency. . . . And he is not as attentive to intellectual history as he should be."

George F. Will, *NYTBR*, June 15, 1997: 8–10.

Thompson, Frank

Beyond the Frontier: The Politics of a Failed Mission, Bulgaria 1944. E. P. Thompson. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1996. 111 pp. $24.95.

Historian E. P. Thompson, recounting the death of his brother on a mission in Bulgaria in 1944, creates "an easel on which to sketch how history can and how it cannot be written, and has several sharp things to say about government weeding policy and the manufacturing of myths to suit political convenience."

M. R. D. Foot, *TLS*, Mar. 14, 1997.

Troublet, Nicolas-Charles-Joseph. See **Briasson, Antoine-Claude.**

Twain, Mark. See **Samuel Clemens.**

Warren, Earl

Chief Justice: A Biography of Earl Warren. Ed Cray. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997. 604 pp. $30.00.

"'Chief Justice' [is] the most comprehensive biography of Warren to date. . . . What Cray does not offer . . . is a sufficient explanation for Warren's evolution from an anti-New Deal Republican stalwart into the most liberal chief justice in history. . . . But if Cray's analysis is somewhat lacking, his work is still rich in raw material, and from that material, a coherent portrait of Warren does emerge. It is the portrait of a classically American man, one moved by an intense love of country and a simple faith in its ideals."

Edward Lazarus, *LATBR*, June 15, 1997: 4.

Warren, Robert Penn

Robert Penn Warren: A Biography. Joseph Blotner. New York: Random House, 1997. 585 pp. $35.00.

"Joseph Blotner, the scholarly biographer of Faulkner, with the full cooperation of Warren until his death in 1989, has done his determined

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best to take a stand for Warren as man and as writer. Given the obstacles of his subject and the limits of his method, Blotner has done well. The biography gives the sense of providing most of what there is to know about the facts of Warren's personal and literary life. It is a story told carefully, meticulously, but not dramatically or imaginatively, and it lacks a cohesive vision of the significance of Warren's days and works."

Fred Kaplan, *WP*, Mar. 10, 1997: 37.

Waugh, Evelyn. See **Mitford, Nancy.**

Wayne, John

John Wayne's America: The Politics of Celebrity. Gary Wills. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997. 380 pp. $26.00.

"The book's crowded agenda, with its generous dose of debunking and deconstruction, yield fascinating insights and revelations, but also irritating and tedious passages as well. Mr. Wills's prodigiousness lies in gifts not usually found together: a zeal for meticulous research combined with the head spinning leaps and pirouettes of the essayist."

Molly Haskell, *NYTBR*, Mar. 23, 1997: 13–14.

"A finely measured account of the actor's career and significance to American history. . . . Even if one does not like Wayne himself, Wills's crisp storytelling skills draw one into the story."

Sight and Sound 7.5 (May 1997): 35.

Wellington, Arthur Wellesley, Duke of

Wellington: A Personal History. Christopher Hibbert. London: HarperCollins, 1997. 460 pp. £20.

"Wellington's life remains vivid and appealing. Readers seeking revelations or reappraisals of it, however, will find neither in Christopher Hibbert's retelling."

Stanley Weintraub, *TLS*, Apr. 18, 1997.

White, Stanford

The Architect of Desire: Beauty and Danger in the Stanford White Family. Suzanne Lessard. New York: Dial, 1996. 334 pp. $24.95.

"Lessard believes that she has finally found her own voice, and she has so much to say that her book is straining at the seams. In short, through Suzanne Lessard's anxiety to cram everything in, the reader is forced to shuffle . . . through a rambling, over-furnished structure. Nevertheless, there are some wonderful details that catch our attention on this erratic tour."

Phyllis Grosskurth, *TLS*, Mar. 28, 1997.

Wiesel, Élie

. . . et la mer n'est pas remplie: Mémoires 2. Élie Wiesel. Paris: Seuil, 1996. 548 pp. FF149.

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This volume contains Wiesel's reactions to Attali's *Verbatim* and to the revelation of Mitterand's relations with Vichy official René Bousquet. One understands how a friendship had been born between the Jewish writer and the President, and how it dissolved. Because of the role played by Wiesel on the international stage, the narrative is understandably not chronological but thematic. A book of quality, which unfortunately constantly uses the incorrect term "holocaust."

Bulletin Critique du Livre Français 578 (Nov. 1996): 1964–5.

Woolf, Virginia

Virginia Woolf. Hermione Lee. New York: Knopf, 1996. 893 pp. $39.95.

Lee "organizes Woolf's life into essaylike chapters—'Biography,' 'Houses,' 'Abuses,' 'Madness'—thereby juxtaposing sophisticated speculation with meticulous research, and the resulting palimpsest of disparate feelings and complex social and physical detail reawakens the pulse-racing experience of reading 'Mrs. Dalloway' for the first time."

The New Yorker, June 9, 1996: 103.

"Although her biography has not uncovered any startling new facts, Ms. Lee's tone and level of interpretation are such that she has performed the impossible: she has rescued Virginia Woolf from her iconic standing and restored her to human dimensions."

Daphne Merkin, *NYTBR*, June 8, 1997: 13–14.

"With her talent for elegant prose Lee combines scholarly research of impressive amplitude and exactness and the rare ability to assert her meaning in simple sentences. . . . Lee's insights into the fundamental contradictions or complexities of Woolf's life are what give her biography greatness and balance."

Carolyn Heilbrun, *Women's Review of Books* 14.9 (June 1997): 1–4.

Yeats, William Butler

W. B. Yeats: A Life. Vol. 1: *The Apprentice Mage, 1865–1914*. R. F. Foster. New York: Oxford UP, 1997. 640 pp. $35.00.

"The old magician, apprentice no longer, has found in Mr. Foster a worthy biographer. He would be relieved to know, as readers of Irish writing have known for some years, that the biographer is himself a fine writer, bearing with grace his knowledge of Irish history, and writing with wit, authority, and, when appropriate, considerable eloquence."

Thomas Flanagan, *NYTBR*, Apr. 6, 1997: 10–12.

". . . the first of two volumes . . . plots Yeats' multiple careers as far as his fiftieth year" with "a capacity for detail that is matched and marshalled by formidable powers of organization. It triumphantly fulfills one of the most ambitious biographical undertakings of the century."

Mick Imlah, *TLS*, Apr. 11, 1997.

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Collections, Group Biographies, and Works of Interest

American Families

Anything Your Little Heart Desires: An American Family Story. Patricia Bosworth. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997. 416 pp. $27.50.

"To this heavy task of understanding [her parents], Ms. Bosworth brings the skills of a biographer who has written about the shipwrecked lives of Montgomery Clift . . . and Diane Arbus, both gnawed by worms of self-destruction. Viewing through the biographer's wide-angle lens, the harsh close-ups softened by the distance of time, she is able to relate fully, with detachment and perspective, the story of her family."

Richard Lingeman, *NYTBR*, Apr. 27, 1997: 10–12.

The Haygoods of Columbus: A Love Story. Will Haygood. Boston: A Peter Davison Book/Houghton Mifflin, 1997. 360 pp. $24.00.

"It is a beautiful story rendered poignant by the utter simplicity of the telling. So stark, in fact, is the writing of this book that Mr. Haygood, a reporter for the Boston Globe, seems to have gone out of his way (perhaps out of necessity) to put great distance between himself and this most personal of stories; but consequently and unfortunately, there is a distance as well between the reader and the story."

Eddie L. Harris, *NYTBR*, Apr. 13, 1997: 22.

Civil War Combatants

For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War. James M. McPherson. New York: Oxford UP, 1997. 237 pp. $23.00.

" . . . beyond politics and ideology were the repeated stress and peril of battle, and in 'For Cause and Comrades,' Mr. McPherson looks at why the soldiers were willing to endure the rigors of combat. He emphasizes the obligations of duty and honor: duty, a moral need for principle; honor, a masculine dedication to preserving reputation and pride. Duty, he says, was slightly more prevalent as a motivator in the North than in the South; honor was slightly more prevalent in the South than in the North."

Russell F. Weigley, *NYTBR*, Mar. 23, 1997: 22.

Film Directors

Who The Devil Made it: Conversations with Robert Aldrich, George Cukor, Allan Dwan, Howard Hawks, Alfred Hitchcock, Chuck Jones, Fritz Lang, Joseph H. Lewis, Sidney Lumet, Leo McCarey, Otto Preminger, Don Seigal, Josef von Sternberg, Frank Tashlin, Edgar G. Ulmer, Raoul Walsh. Peter Bogdanovich. New York: Knopf, 1997. 847 pp. $39.95.

"This is a huge and valuable book, a collection of interviews that Mr. Bogdanovich has conducted since 1960 with 16 great Hollywood directors. For many, it was their last chance to leave a record: Leo McCarey

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was dying of emphysema, Raoul Walsh and Fritz Lang were blind, Alfred Hitchcock was near the end and drinking heavily. Mr. Bogdanovich includes everything: history, technique, gossip, minutiae."

Roger Ebert, *NYTBR*, Apr. 20, 1997: 26.

French Cultural Activists

Dictionnaire Biographique des Militants, XIXe, XXe Siècles. De l'éducation populaire à l'action culturelle. Ed. Geneviève Poujol and Madeleine Romer. Pref. Maurice Agulhon. Paris: L'Harmattan, 1996. 412 pp. FF250.

These 548 biographical notes pay tribute to many forgotten architects of our collective well-being and creators of educational institutions. The lack of methodology leads to a disturbingly great variety of tones from one contributor to another; still, this innovative work is useful and even captivating.

Bulletin Critique du Livre Français 579 (Dec. 1996): 2229.

Holocaust Victims

The Boys: The Untold Story of 732 Young Concentration Camp Survivors. Martin Gilbert. New York: Holt, 1997. 511 pp. $30.00.

"Using the historical method that worked so brilliantly in his multivolume life of Churchill, Martin Gilbert seldom intrudes, and lets the survivors speak for themselves. To be sure, he is always there, assembling the thousands of scraps of memory into a coherent, compelling, moving narrative. The result is undoubtedly part of the healing process, still under way after so many years."

Michael R. Marrus, *NYTBR*, Apr. 20, 1997: 16.

"Gilbert, who had come to know many of the 'boys,' lets them tell their story in their own words. He organizes these recollections in chronological order from the start of the Second World War to their liberation, their arrival in Britain and their lives thereafter. What we have here is a collective first person history of the Holocaust seen through the eyes of its youngest victims. It is a story not only of the horrors of the Holocaust but also the triumph of the human spirit expressed in the physical and mental resilience of these youngsters, their finely tuned survival instinct, their will to live normal lives, and their conscious refusal to let themselves be consumed by hatred for those responsible for the suffering."

Thomas Buergenthal, *WP*, May 12, 1997: 37.

Media Moguls

The Highwaymen: Warriors of the Information Superhighway. Ken Auletta. New York: Random House, 1997. 346 pp. $27.50.

"'The Highwaymen,' a collection of Ken Auletta's profiles (first published in The New Yorker) of the men who dominate the mass media industry, is also unwittingly, a cautionary tale on how quickly business

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certainties change. . . . But for the most part, Mr. Auletta seems much more comfortable mining the moguls' wallets than their hearts."

Judith Newman, *NYTBR*, June 15, 1997: 23.

Sixteenth-Century European Families

The Beggar and the Professor: A Sixteenth-Century Family Saga. Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie. Chicago: Chicago UP, 1997. 407 pp. $29.95.

"The author does not tell a story; he turns about the stories that the Platters tell and swaths their observations in his own. He hunts down perceptions: those of his characters, those of contemporary scholars, and those of later scholars like him. Almost everything you may want to know about the 16th century is in these pages. A lot of it is with us still, for better or, mostly, for worse."

Eugen Weber, *NYTBR*, Apr. 13, 1997: 28.

Soldiers

The Soldiers' Tale: Bearing Witness to Modern War. Samuel Hynes. New York: Allen Lane/Penguin, 1997. 318 pp. $24.95.

"Samuel Hynes, a Marine fighter pilot in the Pacific in World War II and again during the Korean War, knows that 'something' [the look in soldiers' eyes] and, as a distinguished scholar and professor in his other life, has carefully mined the memoirs of 20th-century soldiers seeking the ground truth about war."

Joseph L. Galloway, *WP*, Apr. 14, 1997: 33.

Survivors of Stalin's Camps

True Stories. Lev Razgon. Dana Point, CA: Ardis, 1997. 302 pp. $27.95.

"Though translated accurately enough, the title of the English edition is torn out of the cultural context and stripped of the elegance of the Russian word *nepridunmannoye*. Moreover, by changing the order of the chapters, the editors interrupted the flow of the narrative. And the translation, by John Crowfoot, with its stilted phrases, fails to capture the book's color and energy. '*Nepridunmannoye*' warranted a more respectful treatment."

Paul Goldberg, *NYTBR*, June 15, 1997: 32.

Victorian Novelists

Dickens's Fur Coat and Charlotte's Unanswered Letters: The Rows and Romances of England's Great Victorian Novelists. Daniel Pool. New York: HarperCollins, 1997. 282 pp. $25.00.

"Mr. Pool's material is informative and engaging, especially when chronicling the business side of publishing, and the illustrations he selects are uniformly delightful. When he turns to literary gossip, however, his tone becomes strained and coy. Nonetheless, he is a social historian of uncommon literary wit."

Diane Cole, *NYTBR*, May 25, 1997: 20.

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Women in Congress

Women on the Hill: Challenging the Culture of Congress. Clara Bingham. New York: Times Books/Random House, 1997. 282 pp. $32.00.

"... Clara Bingham's gee-whiz prose keeps 'Women on the Hill' from being deeper, and its unbalanced set of subjects denies any claim to a comprehensive reading of women in Congress."

Adam Clymer, *NYTBR*, Mar. 30, 1997: 17.

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Lifelines

Upcoming Events, Calls for Papers, and News from the Field

Essay Collection. The editors of a forthcoming volume on eighteenth-century diaries invite submissions that extend the strategies and techniques of literary and cultural studies to the analysis of diaries/journals, exploring their purposes, conventions, and characteristic strategies during the "long" eighteenth century, extending roughly from the restoration of the English monarchy (1660) to the fall of Napoleon (1815). For further information, please contact Dan Doll (deded@uno.edu) or Jessica Munns (jxmeg@uno.edu); English Department; University of New Orleans; New Orleans LA 70148. **Deadline:** 1 March 1998.

New Journal. *Eighteenth-Century Women: Studies in Their Works, Lives, and Culture,* a new annual from AMS Press, will publish articles, notes, and reviews on the literary, biographical, bibliographical, social, and cultural history of women during the "long" eighteenth century. As the journal aims to become a record of women's lives and accomplishments, each volume will also include an annotated list of newly edited works by eighteenth-century women. Submissions and requests for information should be send to Professor Linda Veronika Troost; Editor, *Eighteenth-Century Women;* Washington and Jefferson College; Washington, PA 15301-4801 (ltroost@washjeff.edu). **Deadline for the next issue:** 1 February 1998.

New Journal. *Medieval Folklore Studies,* a biannual published in January and September by Hisarlik Press, welcomes submissions that feature a wide range of interpretive strategies, levels. and methodologies. The fall issue of each year will be a general issue, and the spring release a special issue: Vol. 2, Sept. 1998, general issue, submission deadline March 1998; Vol. 3, January 1999, "Race, Ethnicity and Culture," submission deadline September 1998; Vol. 4, September 1999, general issue, submission deadline March 1999; Vol. 5, January 2000, "Medievalism and Modern Folklore," submission deadline September 1999. For further information, please contact Francesca Sautman, at fsautman@shiva.hunter.cuny.edu.

New Database. "Romantic Circles: Publications Section" is now online, featuring databases with search engines and periodical indices for the period 1760 to 1850. The site also includes links to publishers of cited resources. For further information, please contact Michael

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Gamer; English Department; 119 Bennett Hall; University of Pennsylvania; Philadelphia, PA 19104-6273 (http://www.english.upenn.edu/~mgamer/Circles).

Online Journal. *Post Identity* invites essays that explore notions of individual, social, and cultural identity; how identity is constructed, maintained, and challenged; and the relationship between identity claims and texts. Essays of between 2,500 and 10,000 words, using MLA format, should be submitted in triplicate to Hugh Culik or Nicholas Rombes; English Department; University of Detroit Mercy; P.O. Box 19900; Detroit MI 48219-0900 (postid@ libarts.udmercy.edu or http://www.post.id.com).

Online Journal. *Romanticism on the Net*, a peer-reviewed electronic journal entirely devoted to Romantic Studies, is inviting submissions for a special issue on the bicentenary of "Lyrical Ballads." Guest editors Nicola Trott and Seamus Perry are seeking a wide range of approaches and contexts. Submissions of up to 8,000 words should be sent to Michael Laplace-Sinatra; Editor, *Romanticism on the Net*; St. Catherine's College; Oxford OX1 3UJ, England (michael.laplace-sinatra@st-catherines.oxford.ac.uk). *Romanticism on the Net* can be accessed at http://users.ox.ac.us/~scat0385 or http://www-sul.stanford.edu/mirrors/romnet). **Deadline**: 1 December 1998.

Conference. "Women's Exiles," an international, interdisciplinary conference to be held at the Universidad de Huelva, Spain, from April 30 to May 2, 1998, will focus on the marginalization of women throughout history, their literal or figurative exiles, and their survival mechanisms. Abstracts, in English or Spanish, may be emailed to Zenon Luis, luis@uhu.es and Sonia Villega, villegas@uhu.es, or mailed to Professor Mar Gallego; Department of English; Facultad de Humanidades; Campus del Carmen; Universidad de Huelva; Huelva 21071 Spain (fax: 34 59 27 09 87). **Deadline:** 31 January 1998.

Conference. "Living the Past in Historical Reenactments: The Case of the Iztapalapa Pasion," an April 1998 conference organized by the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, Binghamton University, invites submissions that address issues in autobiography, biography, metafictional biography, journals or diaries, memoirs, oral history, or historical discourse. For further information, please contact Professor Sobejano-Moran, Conference Director, at sobe@binghamton.edu, or access the website at http://www.geocities.com/collegepark/4248. **Deadline**: 15 December 1997.

MLA Session. "Eudora Welty and Nineteenth-Century America's Popular 'Scribbling Women': An Unclaimed Heritage," a special

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session of the December 1998 MLA meeting in San Francisco, will be concerned with seeing Welty as an inheritor of nineteenth-century popular culture, especially Hawthorne's scorned women novelists. Please send proposals and submissions to Jo Ellyn Clarey; 326 Norwood SE; Grand Rapids, MI 49506-1717 (francior@gvsu.edu). **Deadline:** 1 March 1998.

Aphra Behn—ASECS Session. "Images of Gender in the Eighteenth-Century: A Syllabi Exchange," the Aphra Behn Society Session at the 1998 ASECS conference, invites participants to engage in a preconference electronic discussion of texts and materials and to submit syllabi for inclusion on the Aphra Behn Society Homepage. The session organizers are seeking five to eight participants, from a variety of disciplines, to engage in a roundtable discussion of their syllabi. For further information, please contact Laura L. Runge; University of South Florida at St. Petersburg; 140 Seventh Avenue South; DAV 258; St. Petersburg, FL 33701-5016 (runge@chuma.cas.usf.edu) or Carole F. Meyers; Computing Resource Services; Emory University; Atlanta, GA 30322 (cmeyers@emory.edu).

8th Annual Virginia Woolf Conference. For a conference on "Virginia Woolf and Communities," conference organizers invite submissions that address issues of community: communities of which Woolf was or was not a part; communities that Woolf describes; textual communities; national, geographical, pedagogical, sexual, gender, ideological, economic, racial, cultural, psychoanalytical, colonial, or post-colonial communities; or current communities of critics. Proposals are welcome for individual papers, films or alternative presentations, performances, readings, multimedia presentations, panels, workshops, or roundtables. Please send a cover page with name(s) and address(es), any institutional affiliations, phone numbers, title of paper(s) or panel and format, and 15 copies of a one-page, 250 word abstract for an individual paper or for each presentation in a panel to Georgia Johnston; Women's Studies Program; Saint Louis University; 221 North Grand Avenue; St. Louis, MO 63103 (johnstgk@slu.edu). **Deadline:** 1 February 1998 postmark.

Special Issue. *Women's Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* invites papers for a special issue on "Virginia Woolf in Performance." For further information, please contact Sally Greene; 406 Morgan Creek Road; Chapel Hill, NC 27514 (sally@sunsite.unc.edu). **Deadline:** 15 February 1998.

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Barbour, John D. *Versions of Deconversion: Autobiography and the Loss of Faith.* Reviewed by Denise Eggers. 20.1 (Winter): 103-05.

Basso, Ellen. *The Last Cannibals: A South American Oral History.* Reviewed by Michael L. Forman. 20.2 (Spring): 220-23.

Caramello, Charles. *Henry James, Gertrude Stein, and the Biographical Act.* Reviewed by Ellen E. Berry. 20.4 (Fall): 485-8.

Dening, Greg. *The Death of William Gooch: A History's Anthropology.* Revised edition. (George) 20.2 (Spring 1997): 209-10.

Franklin, V. P., ed. *Living Our Stories, Telling Our Truths: Autobiography and the Making of the African-American Intellectual Tradition* Reviewed by J. D. Scrimgeour. 20.1 (Winter): 105-08.

Goldman, Anne E. *Take My Word: Autobiographical Innovations of Ethnic American Working Women.* Reviewed by Gloria Fisk. 20.3 (Summer): 347-50.

Graver, Lawrence. *An Obsession with Anne Frank: Meyer Levin and the Diary.* Reviewed by Alvin H. Rosenfeld) 20.2 (Spring): 210-14.

Grumet, Robert S., ed. *Northeastern Indian Lives, 1632-1816.* Reviewed by Michael A. Elliott. 20.3 (Summer): 350-53.

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Keefe, Terry, and Edmund Smyth, eds. *Autobiography and the Existential Self.* Reviewed by Debra B. Bergoffen. 20.2 (Spring): 214-6.

Landes, Richard. *Relics, Apocalypse, and the Deceits of History: Ademar of Chabannes, 989-1034.* Reviewed by Donald Maddox. 20.2 (Spring): 216-20.

Middlekauff, Robert. *Benjamin Franklin and His Enemies.* Reviewed by Robert F. Sayre. 20.3 (Summer): 344-7

Moss, Carolyn J. *Kate Field: Selected Letters.* Reviewed by Donald J. Winslow. 20.4 (Fall): 493-5.

Raleigh, Donald J., ed., and A. A. Iskenderov, compiler. *The Emperors and Empresses of Russia: Rediscovering the Romanovs.* Reviewed by Charlotte Rosenthal. 20.3 (Summer): 353-6.

Rodman, Gilbert B. *Elvis After Elvis: The Posthumous Career of a Living Legend.* Reviewed by Karal Ann Marling. 20.4 (Fall): 495-7.

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Contributors

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Damon Chong ("*Biography:* The First Twenty Years") received his B.A. in English from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. He is an editorial assistant with *Biography.*

Richard F. Dietrich (Review of Weintraub, *Shaw's People*), Professor of English at the University of South Florida, is the author of *Bernard Shaw's Novels: Portraits of the Author as Man and Superman* (UP of Florida, 1996), *British Drama 1890 to 1950: A Critical History* (Twayne, 1989), *The Art of Fiction* (Holt, 1967), and numerous articles on twentieth-century figures. He is a member of the editorial boards of *Shaw* and the University Press of Florida.

David King Dunaway ("Radio and Biography") teaches writing and broadcasting at the University of New Mexico. He is the author of award-winning documentaries and biographies, including *How Can I Keep from Singing: Peter Seeger* (McGraw-Hill, 1981) and *Huxley in Hollywood* (Bloomsbury, 1989).

Steven V. Hunsaker ("Nation, Family, and Language in Victor Perera's *Rites* and Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior*") is Assistant Professor of Spanish at Emporia State University. He has published articles on ethnicity, nationalism, and autobiography in literature from Latin America and the United States.

Karal Ann Marling (Review of Rodman, *Elvis After Elvis*) teaches art history and American Studies at the University of Minnesota. She is the author of *Graceland: Going Home With Elvis* (Harvard UP, 1996).

Mark Panek ("*Biography*: The First Twenty Years"), senior editorial assistant with *Biography,* is completing his M.A. thesis in English at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa—a biographical study of the Hawaiian-born sumo grand champion *yokozuna* Akebono.

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Lorraine Elena Roses (Review of Baker and Baker, *The WPA Oklahoma Slave Narratives*), is Professor of Spanish and Co-Director of Latin American Studies at Wellesley College. She is co-editor with Ruth E. Randolph of *Harlem's Glory: Black Women Writing, 1900–1950* (Harvard UP, 1996).

Rena Sanderson ("Suicide and Literary Biography: The Case of Hemingway"), Assistant Professor of English at Boise State University, publishes on modernist writers, especially Hemingway. She edited *Blowing the Bridge: Essays on Hemingway and* For Whom the Bell Tolls (Greenwood, 1992) and wrote the chapter on "Hemingway and Gender History" in *The Cambridge Companion to Hemingway* (1996).

Richard K. Sanderson ("Suicide and Literary Biography: The Case of Hemingway"), Associate Professor of English at Boise State University, has published several articles on suicide in literature and in life-writing.

Michael Sheringham (Review of Ashley et al., *Autobiography and Postmodernism*) is Professor of French in the University of London. He has written widely on surrealism and modern poetry, and is the author of *French Autobiography: Devices and Desires* (Oxford UP, 1993).

Jean Yamasaki Toyama (Review of Abbott, *Beckett Writing Beckett*), Professor of French at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, is the author of *Beckett's Game: Self and Language in the Trilogy* (Peter Lang, 1991), and co-editor of *Literary Relations: East and West* (U of Hawai'i—East-West Center, 1990). Her poetry appears in *What the Kite Thinks* (U of Hawai'i P, 1994).

Phyllis Wachter ("Annual Bibliography of Works About Life-Writing") is currently editing her upcoming book on *Ethel Arnold: New Victorian Woman*, which will be published by Macmillan, London.

Donald J. Winslow (Review of Moss, *Kate Field*) is Professor Emeritus of English at Boston University, and Trustee Emeritus and Archivist at Lasell College. He has published articles on Thomas Hardy, especially on Hardy's portraits. The second, revised and enlarged edition of his *Life-Writing: A Glossary of Terms in Biography, Autobiography, and Related Forms* was published by the University of Hawai'i Press in 1995.

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Annual Bibliography of Works About Life-Writing

Phyllis E. Wachter

Two or three things I know for sure, and one of them is what it means to have no loved version of your life but the one you make.

—Dorothy Allison

We document our past as a way of revering it. We are all historians, in a way. We believe we must lift up the past, remake it, transform it into the future. The secret of our strength is merely that: we know that memory is the crux of our humanity.

—Erica Jong

One must have some sense of responsibility, empowerment, individuality. One must already have a sense of oneself as a person with boundaries before one can begin to dissolve those boundaries.

—Joan Tollifson

The message of Peter Balakian's *Black Dog of Fate*, a family memoir about the genocide of the Armenian people, is that memory has become a moral act. Many of this year's entries indicate that there has been a concerted worldwide effort to record and memorialize the lives of individuals victimized by war, by slavery, by "ethnic cleansing," by racism, by the Holocaust, by homophobia, and by sexism. As human beings, we are endowed with the judgment to determine whom we will remember and the conscience to choose what we should leave behind. Unfortunately, selective amnesia all too often influences whom we decide to exclude and what we choose to leave out.

Individually, as authors of our own life stories, we have the ability to rewrite the life-texts of those human beings who have been temporarily lost or forgotten, just as collectively, we have an opportunity to help perpetuate the inclusion of the widest spectrum of human difference and diversity. Obscuring any boundaries separating individuals from each other, the collective mindset in its most idealized form has the potential for encompassing the greatest possible universal identity.

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Certainly, this year's emphasis on teaching youth from their own journal writing experiences reinforces the assumption that the future depends on an educated, informed, and loving electorate. For though as individuals, we give our own lives value and meaning, collectively, we-the-people may well be humanity's best and only real hope for the twenty-first century.

Entries for January 1996 to July 1997

Multimedia

Burkett, Randall, and Nancy Burkett, eds. *African American Biographical Database*. Alexandria, VA: Chadwyck-Healy, 1997.

A World Wide Web-based database of over 30,000 biographies of African Americans who lived between 1790 and 1950; periodically updated and containing photos.

Cannon, John, and Frank Robinson, dirs. *Biography Database 1680–1830*. Newcastle: Romulus Press/Avero–University of Newcastle on Tyne, 1996–.

A comprehensive CD-ROM-based series of biographical, historical, and genealogical data for the U.K. and U.S., drawn from personal, institutional, church, society, legal, and publication records.

Books

Abbott, H. Porter. *Beckett Writing Beckett: The Author in the Autograph*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1996.

Resurrects the "author" by relocating Beckett's writing as autography, rather than autobiography or fiction.

Adams, Bluford. *E Pluribus Barnum: The Great Showman and the Making of U.S. Popular Culture*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1997.

Uses the biography of Barnum to analyze the formation of nineteenth-century popular culture and the entertainment industry.

Anderson, Judith H., Donald Cheney, and David A. Richardson, eds. *Spenser's Life and the Subject of Biography*. Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1996.

Investigates what bearing Spenser's poetry might have on his biography.

Baker, Carlos. *Emerson Among the Eccentrics: A Group Portrait*. New York: Viking, 1996.

Constructs a group biography of Emerson's friendships to shed light on Emerson's life.

Baker, T. Lindsay, and Julie P. Baker. *The WPA Oklahoma Slave Narratives*. Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 1996.

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Explores issues in ethnographic interviewing and oral history as it presents in one volume all the Oklahoma freedmen's oral naratives from the 1930s Federal Writer's Project.

Barnham, Michelle. *Captivity and Sentiment: Cultural Exchange in American Literature, 1681-1861.* Hanover, NH: UP of New England, 1997.

Uses Bhabha's idea of interstitiality to analyze captivity literature as crossing cultural borders.

Barros, Carolyn. *Autobiography: Narrative of Transition.* Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1997.

A primer for the study of the genre, using primarily Victorian examples to explain autobiographies as narratives of transformation.

Bower, Anne L. *Epistolary Response: The Letter in Twentieth Century American Fiction and Criticism.* Tuscaloosa: U of Alabama P, 1996.

Examines the use of letters in critical writing as the basis for discussions of identity and discourse.

Boyle, Marjorie O'Rourke. *Loyola's Acts: The Rhetoric of the Self.* The New Historicism: Studies in Cultural Poetics 36. Berkeley: U of California P, 1997.

Examines Loyola's autobiography as a fictional moral narrative, an example of rhetorical autobiography that uses religious iconography to turn a private life story into a Christian hermeneutic.

Broughton, Trev, and Linda Anderson, eds. *Women's Lives/Women's Times: New Essays on Auto/Biography.* Albany: SUNY P, 1997.

Explores how the study of autobiography can contribute to the theory, practice, and politics of a women-centered women's studies curriculum, and to feminist theory.

Bunkers, Suzanne L., and Cynthia A. Huff. *Inscribing the Daily: Critical Essays on Women's Diaries.* Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1996.

Essays on the literary, philosophical, and psychological dimensions of diary-keeping by women.

Cameron, Elspeth, and Janice Dickin, eds. *Great Dames.* Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1997.

Uses various feminist theoretical approaches in combining biographical sketches, memoirs, and essays on 20th-century Canadian women to subvert the idea of biography as relating the public career of public men.

Caramello, Charles. *Henry James, Gertrude Stein, and the Biographical Act.* Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1996.

Studies how writers often write autobiographically under the guise of biographical portraiture. [Reviewed in this issue.]

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Castiglia, Christopher. *Bound and Determined: Captivity, Culture-Crossing, and White Womanhood from Mary Rowlandson to Patty Hearst.* Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1996.

Examines more than sixty captivity narratives by American women, finding them to be imaginative challenges to rigid gender roles and racial and national ideologies.

Cerela, Laura. *Collected Letters of a Renaissance Feminist.* Ed. and trans. Diana Robins. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1997.

An autobiography in the form of personal letters, tracing women's contributions to the political and intellectual life of early modern Europe.

Cimbala, Paul A., and Robert F. Himmelberg, eds. *Historians and Race: Autobiography and the Writing of History.* Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1996.

Autobiographical essays from eight historians reflecting upon how their personal experiences influenced their scholarship and careers.

Clyman, Toby W., and Judith Vowles, eds. *Russia Through Women's Eyes: Autobiographies from Tsarist Russia.* New Haven: Yale UP, 1997.

Introduces eleven previously untranslated 19th-century Russian women's autobiographies.

Collins, Bradley. *Leonardo, Psychoanalysis, and Art History.* Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1997.

Explores what psychoanalytic theory can add to the biography of an artist.

Cooke, Miriam. *Women and the War Story.* Berkeley: U of California P, 1997.

Presents a fundamental revision of the war story genre by examining contemporary Arab women writers.

Davidson, Miles H. *Columbus Then and Now: A Life Reexamined.* Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 1997.

Critiques recent Columbus biographies in light of 16th and 17th century accounts.

Dissanayake, Wimal, ed. *Narratives of Agency: Self-Making in China, India, and Japan.* Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1996.

Eight essays on the narratives and construction of agency and self in China, India, and Japan.

Donald, Diana. *The Age of Caricature: Satirical Prints in the Reign of George III.* New Haven: Yale UP, 1996.

Approaches eighteenth-century lifewriting through graphic art.

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Donoghue, Frank. *The Fame Machine: Book Reviewing and Eighteenth-Century Literary Careers*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1996.

Examines how the reshaping of a literary career by the commodification of writing in the eighteenth century impacts literary biography.

Dvorak, Marta, ed. *Biographical Creation / La Création Biographique*. Rennes: Presses Universitaires Rennes, 1997.

Bilingual collection of thirty-five essays on biographical theory, literature, texts, and history.

Evasdaughter, Elizabeth N. *Catholic Girlhood Narratives: The Church and Self-Denial*. Boston: Northeastern UP, 1996.

Reveals the author's impetus for autobiographical expression as she presents other women's childhood narratives.

Farr, Judith. *I Never Came to You in White*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1996.

A novel which fictionally attempts to flesh out the characters and events in Emily Dickinson's world.

Faull, Katherine M. *Moravian Women's Memoirs: Spiritual Narratives, 1750-1820*. Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 1996.

Examines over forty narratives of Pennsylvania missionaries, as Moravians were required to write autobiographies of their spiritual and earthly lives.

Ferrante, Joan M. *To the Glory of Her Sex: Women's Roles in the Composition of Medieval Texts*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1997.

Reading in the public and private correspondence of medieval women to explore their roles as patrons, collaborators, and authors.

Ferrazzi, Cecilia. *Autobiography of an Aspiring Saint*. Ed. and trans. Anne Jacobson Schutte. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1996.

Presents a manuscript by the 17th-century Venetian Ferrazzi as a new subgenre of "inquisitorial autobiography."

Fleischner, Jennifer. *Mastering Slavery: Memory, Family, and Identity in Women's Slave Narratives*. New York: NY UP, 1996.

Analyzes the transformation of memory in autobiographical works by Child, Drumgoold, Foote, Jacobs, Keely, and Stowe.

Gaustad, Edwin S. *Sworn on the Altar of God: A Religious Biography of Thomas Jefferson*. New York: Eerdmans, 1996.

Part of the Library of Religious Biography, this work places Jefferson's religious life in the context of his political activities and his times.

Glancy, Diane. *The West Pole*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1997.

Creative nonfiction combining personal essays, sketches, and Cherokee myths to create a strategy for story making and identity making.

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Goldman, Anne E. *Take My Word: Autobiographical Innovations of Ethnic American Working Women*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1996.

Analyzes the nontraditional autobiographies found in marginalized texts by working class, ethnic American women. [Reviewed in *Biography* 20.3.]

Gorkin, Michael, and Rafiqa Othman. *Three Mothers, Three Daughters: Palestinian Women's Stories*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1996.

Juxtaposes six oral narratives to trace the last forty years of Palestinian history.

Grumet, Robert S. ed. *Northeastern Indian Lives, 1632–1816*. Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1996.

Fifteen essays documenting the geographical and cultural diversity and history of Native Americans in New England. [Reviewed in *Biography* 20.3.]

Gugelberger, George M., ed. *The Real Thing: Testimonial Discourse and Latin America*. Durham: Duke UP, 1997.

Explores how the Latin American genre of *testimonio* became canonized as resistance literature.

Harrington, Walt. *At the Heart of It: Ordinary People, Extraordinary Lives*. U of Missouri P, 1996.

Adapts the techniques of investigative reporters to tell the lives of ordinary people.

Holton, Gerald. *Einstein, History and Other Passions: The Rebellion Against Science and the End of the Twentieth Century*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1996.

Uses Einstein's life story to reflect on the history of science and its relationship to literature.

Hynes, Samuel. *The Soldiers' Tale: Bearing Witness to Modern War*. New York: Allen Lane-Penguin, 1997.

Analyzes memoirs of W.W. I, W.W. II, and Vietnam in fashioning a consistent genre of "war tale."

Jong, Erica. *Inventing Memory: A Novel of Mothers and Daughters*. New York: HarperCollins, 1997.

Using different narrative styles, Jong interweaves the lives and voices of four generations of women over a hundred year period, creating a narrative space where fiction interfaces with collective Jewish history.

Kanner, Penny. *Women in Context: 200 Years of British Women Autobiographers, A Reference Guide and Reader*. New York: G. K. Hall, 1997.

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A critical, biographical, and bibliographical guide to 1,040 published narrative autobiographies by 840 British women from the 18th to the early 20th centuries.

Kempthorne, Charley. *For All Time: A Complete Guide to Writing Your Family History*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, Boynton/Cook, 1996.

Presents techniques and forms for writing family narratives.

Krementz, Jill. *The Writer's Desk*. New York: Random House, 1996.

Captures in photographs frozen moments in the lives of featured writers poised in the act of writing.

Ladurie, Emmanuel Le Roy. *The Beggar and the Professor: A 16th-Century Family Saga*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1997.

Uses personal narratives of a rural peasant and his sons to portray early modern European society.

Leiner, Katherine. *First Children: Growing Up in the White House*. New York: Tambourine, 1996.

One of the few books on First Children, it contains seventeen profiles.

Lejeune, Philippe. *Bibliographie des études en langue française sur la littérature personnelle & les récits de vie 7 (1994-95)*. RITM 13. Paris: Université Paris X, 1996.

Latest volume of Lejeune's lifewriting bibliography.

_____. *Le pacte autobiographique*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1996.

Revised and expanded edition of Lejeune's classic 1975 work on autobiographical theory.

Lieblich, Amia. *Conversations with Dvora: An Experimental Biography of the First Modern Hebrew Woman Writer*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1997. Ed. Naomi Seidman and Chana Kronfeld. Trans. Naomi Seidman.

Explores the life of Dvora Baron as a series of conversations with the author, who never met her.

Loughlin, Gerard. *Telling God's Story: Bible, Church, and Narrative Theology*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996.

Defends the truths of the biblical story in terms of "narrative theology."

Lupton, Judith Reinhardt. *Afterlives of the Saints: Hagiography, Typology, and Renaissance Literature*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1996.

Explores the literary genre of hagiography and the hermeneutical paradigm of Biblical typology in Renaissance literature.

Mascuch, Michael. *Origins of the Individualist Self: Autobiography and Self-Identity in England, 1591-1791*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1997.

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Traces the emergence of the modern Western concept of self-identity in early modern England by reexamining the forms of biography, diary, and autobiography.

McCooey, David. *Artful Histories: Modern Australian Autobiography*. Cambridge UP, 1996.

Points out themes in Australian autobiography, while arguing that autobiographical theory challenges poststructuralist ideas of the self.

McNamara, Jo Ann Kay. *Sisters in Arms: Catholic Nuns Through Two Millennia*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1996.

A history of women's rights through life stories of women religious.

Mendelsohn, Jane. *I Was Amelia Earhart*. New York: Knopf, 1996.

Creates the author's own version of the famous aviator's last flight, sometimes quoting from Earhart's own journals.

Middlekauff, Robert. *Benjamin Franklin and His Enemies*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1996.

Crafts a biography of Franklin by focusing on his relations with his enemies. [Reviewed in *Biography* 20.3.]

Muske, Carol. *Women and Poetry: Truth, Autobiography, and the Shape of the Self*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1997.

Argues that a sense of self is present as autobiographical referent in women's testimonial poems.

Naves, Elaine Kalman. *Journey to Vaja: Reconstructing the World of a Hungarian-Jewish Family*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's, 1996.

Combines immigrant autobiography with family chronicle going back two hundred years.

Newey, Vincent, and Philip Shaw, eds. *Mortal Pages, Literary Lives: Studies in Nineteenth-Century Autobiography*. London: Scolar, 1996.

Twelve essays on nineteenth-century English and American literary autobiography.

Newman, Herta. *Virginia Woolf and Mrs. Brown: Toward a Realism of Uncertainty*. New York: Garland, 1996.

Chapter 6 focuses on "Biography and the Problem of Verisimilitude."

Parati, Graziella. *Public History, Private Stories: Italian Women's Autobiography*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1996.

Explores how Italian woman writers have articulated their identities through autobiography, from the seventeenth century to the present.

Parke, Catherine N. *Biography: Writing Lives*. Studies in Literary Themes and Genres. New York: Routledge, 1996.

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Gives a critical-historical overview of biography, assesses selected biographies, and surveys group and collective biographies.

Pask, Kevin. *The Emergence of the English Author: Scripting the Life of the Poet in Early Modern England*. Cambridge Studies in Renaissance Literature and Culture. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996.

Examines early life narratives of Chaucer, Sidney, Spenser, Donne, and Milton to trace the cultural construction of literary authority and literary biography.

Pelikan, Jaroslav. *Mary Through the Centuries: Her Place in the History of Culture*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1996.

A doctrinal history of views of Mary from the early Church through the Reformation.

Pomerantz, Gary M. *Where Peachtree Meets Sweet Auburn: The Saga of Two Families and the Making of Atlanta*. New York: Scribner's, 1996.

Uses family biography to tell the history of Atlanta.

Ramsay, Raylene L. *The French New Autobiographies: Sarraute, Duras, and Robbe-Grillet*. Gainesville: U of Florida P, 1996.

Explores "autofictions," autobiographies that slide between memories, fact, and fiction in escaping the limits imposed by traditional autobiographical conventions.

Rhiel, Mary, and David Suchoff, eds. *The Seductions of Biography*. New York: Routledge, 1996.

Investigates how biography should be treated as a "popular genre," while presenting a wide range of other postmodern perspectives.

Robinson, Nicholas K. *Edmund Burke: A Life in Caricature*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1997.

A biography of Burke and an account of eighteenth-century British politics as presented in cartoons and caricatures.

Rodman, Gilbert B. *Elvis After Elvis: The Posthumous Career of a Living Legend*. New York: Routledge, 1996.

Combines biography and cultural studies in examining the iconography of Elvis Presley. [Reviewed in this issue.]

Rugg, Linda Haverty. *Picturing Ourselves: Photography and Autobiography*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1997.

Shows how photography has transformed the way we picture ourselves, focusing on four autobiographers obsessed with self-image: Mark Twain, August Strindberg, Walter Benjamin, and Christa Wolf.

Salvatore, Nick. *We All Got History: The Memory Books of Amos Webber*. New York: Times Books, 1996.

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Describes the recovery at Harvard of journals written by a nineteenth-century African American participant in the underground railroad saga.

Salwak, Dale, ed. *The Literary Biography: Problems and Solutions*. Iowa City: U of Iowa P, 1996.

In nineteen essays, examines everything from the traditional biographical form to psychobiography.

Simion, Eugen. *The Return of the Author*. Ed. and Intro. James W. Newcomb. Trans. James W. Newcomb and Lidia Vianu. Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1996.

English translation of Simion's 1982 work on how writers who criticize classical biographical approaches themselves look into authors' lives.

Smith, Sidonie, and Gisela Brinker-Gabler, eds. *Writing New Identities: Gender, Nation, and Immigration in Contemporary Europe*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1996.

Explores changing notions of community and identity in Europe.

Smith, Sidonie, and Julia Watson, eds. *Getting a Life: Everyday Uses of Autobiography*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1996.

Stems from papers given at a 1992 MLA session and focuses on issues pertinent to interpreting American life in the 1990s.

Soderholm, James. *Fantasy, Forgery, and the Byron Legend*. Lexington: UP of Kentucky, 1996.

Explores the impact of contemporary forgeries, Byron's fame, and his relations with women and his readership on his image.

Soussloff, Catherine M. *The Absolute Artist: The Historiography of a Concept*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1997.

Traces the social construction of the idea of the artist through the use of "artist anecdotes" in biographies and examines artists' biographies as a rhetorical form, from the fifteenth century to the present.

Steussy, Fredric S. *Eighteenth-Century German Autobiography: The Emergence of Individuality*. New York: Peter Lang, 1996.

Follows the development of German prose autobiography.

Sulloway, Frank S. *Born to Rebel: Birth Order, Family Dynamics, and Creative Lives*. New York: Pantheon/Random House, 1996.

Argues for a link between personal development and family history.

Suzuki, Tomi. *Narrating the Self: Fictions of Japanese Modernity*. Stanford: U of Stanford P, 1996.

Traces the historical formation of the concept of the self through the autobiographical narrative "I-novel."

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Szarmach, Paul E., ed. *Holy Men and Holy Women: Old English Prose Saints' Lives and Their Contexts.* Albany: SUNY P, 1996.

Contrasts Anglo-Saxon prose saints' lives, the major body of surviving Old English prose, with the Anglo-Latin hagiographical tradition.

Tindall, Gillian. *Célestine: Voices from a French Village.* New York: Holt, 1996.

Uses life stories to tell the history of a region.

Veeser, H. Aram, ed. *Confessions of the Critics: North American Critics' Autobiographical Moves.* New York: Routledge, 1996.

Explores the autobiographical turn in recent literary criticism.

Wagstaff, Peter. *Memory and Desire: Retif de la Bretonne, Autobiography and Utopia.* Atlanta: Rodopi, 1996.

Explores the intersection of eighteenth-century autobiographical fictions and literary utopias.

Walker, Stephanie Kirkwood. *This Woman in Particular: Contexts for the Biographical Image of Emily Carr.* Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfred Laurier UP, 1996.

Presents an examination of the contextual frameworks for the various biographies of a Canadian painter.

Whitlock, Gillian, ed. *Autographs: Contemporary Australian Autobiography.* Queensland: U of Queensland P, 1997.

A historical and analytical introduction, and excerpts from autobiographies by thirty-five Australians.

Wilson, Liz. *Charming Cadavers: Horrific Figurations of the Feminine in Indian Buddhist Hagiographic Literature.* Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1996.

Shows how the "male gaze" created depictions of women which objectified their gender in negative emblematic terms.

Wineapple, Brenda. *Sister Brother: Gertrude and Leo Stein.* New York: Putnam's, 1996.

Presents a new understanding of Gertrude Stein by focusing on the role she and her brother Leo played in each other's personal and creative lives. [Reviewed in *Biography* 20.3.]

Wullschläger, Jackie. *Inventing Wonderland: The Lives and Fantasies of Lewis Carroll, Edward Lear, J. M. Barrie, Kenneth Grahame, and A. A. Milne.* New York: Free Press, 1996.

Prosopography on children's literature.

Zemel, Carol. *Van Gogh's Progress: Utopia, Modernity and Late-Nineteenth Century Art.* Berkeley: U of California P, 1997.

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Explores the life of Van Gogh from the social context of Utopia theory and movements.

Special Issues and Annuals

Biography and Source Studies 2 (1996). Ed. Frederick R. Karl.

With the following essays:

Butscher, Edward. "A Mug's Game: Writing the First Life of Sylvia Plath." 9-26.

Explores the challenges the author encountered in writing the first biography of Sylvia Plath.

Erlich, Gloria. "Subjectivity and Speculation in Thematic Biography: Nathaniel Hathorne and Edith Wharton." 79-96.

In considering the genesis of her works on Hawthorne and Wharton, distinguishes thematic from narrative biography.

Gutman, Judith Mara. "On Biography: The Case for Minor Characters." 37-52.

Uses examples from her work-in-progress on Alfred Stieglitz to discuss the definitions, roles, and places of minor characters in biographies.

Kaplan, Fred. "James Without Beret." 1-8.

In grounding his biography of Henry James in new ways of looking at James, argues for the centrality of historical placement to the biographical enterprise.

Karl, Frederick R. "A Mutant: Biography/Autobiography/Fiction." 125-40.

Analyzes Harold Brodkey's *The Runaway Soul* as a testing of generic forms and boundaries.

Klein, Carole. "The Quest for Doris Lessing." 27-36.

Uses her experience in writing an unauthorized biography of Doris Lessing to discuss the dilemmas involved in writing a biography without cooperation from the subject.

Levin, Gail. "Biography and Catalogue Raisonné: Edward Hopper in Two Genres." 111-124.

Discusses the interplay between writing a catalogue raisonné and a biography of the same subject, and their implications for art history.

Molesworth, Charles. "Setting Tropes and Avoiding Traps: The Dangers of Poststructuralist Biography." 97-110.

Seeks common ground between theorists who reject the idea of the author and those who use the life story of an artist as an interpretive tool.

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Rubin, Nancy. "Biographer's Dilemma: The Humanization of an Infamous Historical Figure." 69-78.

Uses Queen Isabella as a case study to explore how biographers address their subjects least attractive traits.

Wineapple, Brenda. "Reflections on Two: Gertrude and Leo Stein." 53-68.

Explores the challenges of creating narrative unity in writing a biography of two people and their relationship.

Essays on Canadian Writing 60 (Winter 1996).

A special issue on Canadian autobiography, with the following articles:

Buss, Helen. "Listening to the 'ground noise' of Canadian Women Settlers' Memoirs: A Maternal Intercourse of Discourses." 199–214.

The absence of a discourse on the maternal body in autobiographies and archives of Canadian women settlers illustrates the subversive nature of the bodies of mothers and the experience of motherhood.

Dellamora, Richard. "Queering Modernism: A Canadian in Paris." 256–74.

Uses John Glassco's *Memoirs of Montparnasse* to question the role of truth in autobiography and in male heterosexual modernism.

Egan, Susanna. "Emily Carr and the Landscapes of Autobiography." 166–97.

Explores how Carr offered a different understanding of autobiography and self-perception, constructing a self through two media, writing and painting.

Hjartarson, Paul. "Male Subjectivity, Storytelling, and Loss: The Representation of Masculinity in *The Russian Album*." 235–55.

Shows how Michael Ignatieff uses his autobiography to rewrite his history in terms of a masculinity different from that presented in his father's autobiography.

Hoy, Helen. "'And use the words that were hers': Constructions of Subjectivity in Beverly Hungry Wolf's *The Ways of My Grandmothers*." 32–59.

Examines how Hungry Wolf's autobiography reflects her native culture's concern for the group, hiding and spreading her narrative self throughout the work.

Kadar, Marlene. "The Discourse of Ordinariness and 'Multicultural History.'" 119–38.

Argues that ethnographic autobiographies offer multicultural perspectives on women's writing, adding to the discourses on self-perception, identity, and ethnicity.

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Neuman, Shirley. "Writing the Reader, Writing the Self in Aritha van Herk's *Places Far from Ellesmere*." 215–34.

Reads van Herk's mix of autobiography and fiction in light of Derrida's notion of 'otobiography,' offering an alternative reading of fiction and autobiography.

Perreault, Jeanne. "Writing Whiteness: Linda Griffith's Raced Subjectivity in *The book of Jessica*." 14–28.

Uses Griffith's autobiographical, collaborative account to raise questions of identity, race, and feminism for white women.

Rimstead, Roxanne. "Mediated Lives: Oral Histories and Cultural Memory." 139–66.

Explores how oral stories of ordinary people, chronicled by academics, offer insight into the culture of historically neglected people and an opportunity for solidarity between writer and subject.

Rudy, Susan. "'What There Is Teasing Beyond the Edges': Claire Harris's Liminal Autobiography." 78–99.

Shows how Harris's work provides readers with a nontraditional understanding of autobiography and self-representation.

Tausky, Thomas E. "An Ordered Olympus Viewed from a Cane Chair: Sara Jeannette Duncan's *The Crow's Nest*." 100–19.

Examines Duncan's autobiography as an act of self-exploration establishing an identity beyond the traditional roles of wife and mother.

Warley, Linda. "Reviewing Past and Future: Postcolonial Canadian Autobiography and Lee Maracle's *Bobbi Lee, Indian Rebel*." 59–78.

Suggests Native autobiography, such as Lee Maracle's, can help nations better understand their own history and that of Native people.

Winter, Angela Roorda. "'Faith in the Process': Reading Elly Danica's *Don't: A Woman's Word*." 187–99.

Explores Danica's use of narrative form and language to offer a close view of emotional and sexual abuse and healing in a way that promotes a sense of unity with other women survivors.

Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies 17.2 (1996).

Special issue on self-narrative in ethnic and culture-based literature, with the following articles:

Fowler, Shelli B., Tiffany Ana López, Kate Shanley, Caroline Chung Simpson, and Traise Yamamoto. "Negotiating Textual Terrain: A Conversation on Critical and Pedagogical Interventions in the Teaching of Ethnic Autobiography." 4–49.

An on-line conversation on cultural differences in ethnic autobiographies.

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Riney-Kehrberg, Pamela. "'Broke in Spirits': Death, Depression, and Endurance Through Writing." 70–86.

A reading of women's diaries as providing an empathetic audience and a sense of community and solace.

Stefanko, Jacqueline. "New Ways of Telling: Latinas' Narratives of Exile and Return." 50–69.

Narratives that arise from crossing linguistic and cultural borders create hybrid texts that allow the authors to survive in the diaspora.

Journal of Women's History 9.1 (1997).

Special issue on collective memory, with the following articles:

Epp, Marlene. "The Memory of Violence: Soviet and East European Mennonite Refugees and Rape in the Second World War." 58–87.

Discusses the need to attend to the silences and contradictions in collective memory.

Honig, Emily. "Striking Lives: Oral History and the Politics of Memory." 139–57.

Explores the genre of oral history by focusing on the Farah strike by Mexican-American union activists.

Johnson, Martin P. "Memory and the Cult of Revolution in the 1871 Paris Commune." 39–57.

Traces how women's gendered collective memories of the French Revolution shaped their activities during the Paris Commune.

Knight, Louise W. "Biography's Window on Social Change: Benevolence and Justice in Jane Addams's 'A Modern Lear.'" 111–38.

Shows how a gendered experience can lead to a class critique, focusing on a discussion of the Pullman strike.

Ledesma, Irene. "Confronting Class: Comment on Honig." 158–63.

Emphasizes the personal present an interviewer imparts to collective memory.

Schwalm, Leslie A. "'Sweet Dreams of Freedom': Freedwomen's Reconstruction of Life and Labor in Lowcountry South Carolina." 9–38.

Discusses how Freedwomen's labor contracts transformed labor in the South.

Walcott, Victoria W. "'Bible, Bath, and Broom': Nannie Helen Burroughs' National Training School and African-American Racial Uplift." 88–110.

Explores the autobiographical impact of generational differences among students at the National Training School.

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Articles

Antonek, Janis L., Dawn E. McCormick, and Richard Donato. "The Student Teacher Portfolio as Autobiography: Developing a Professional Identity." *Modern Language Journal* 81.1 (Spring 1997): 15–27.

Shows how portfolios can help form the identities of novice teachers.

Balina, Marina. "Russian Autobiographies of the Twentieth Century: Fictions of the Self: Special Issue Introduction." *a/b: Auto/biography Studies* 11.2 (Fall 1996): 3-7.

Introduces the fictional and documentary elements in Russian autobiographies.

Barratt, Andrew. "Maksim Gorky's Autobiographical Trilogy: The Lure of Myth and the Power of Fact." *a/b: Auto/biography Studies* 11.2 (Fall 1996): 24–42.

Examines the context for Gorky's autobiographical trilogy, showing how he undermined tensions between myth-making and truth-telling.

Barrington, Judith. "With Malice Toward None." *Women's Review of Books* 13.10-11 (July 1996): 21.

Explores the decisions facing memoir writers about whether or not to write facts that may harm others.

Broughton, Trev Lynn. "Impotence, Biography, and the Froude-Carlyle Controversy: 'Revelations on Ticklish Topics.'" *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 7.4 (Apr. 1997): 502–37.

Examines the controversy over James Anthony Froude's biography of Carlyle to show how the nature of sexuality began to influence biography in the 1880s.

Bruder, Klaus Jorgen. "Die Erfindung der Biographie im therapeutischen Gesprach." *Zeitschrift für Individualpsychologie* 21 (1996): 313–24.

Argues for the construction, rather than the reconstruction, of the autobiographical self in the therapeutic conversation.

Canepa, Nancy L. "The Writing Behind the Wall: Arcangela Tarbotti's *Inferno monacale* and Cloistral Autobiography in the Seventeenth Century." *Forum Italicum* 30.1 (Spring 1996): 1–23.

Examines seventeenth-century Italian religious autobiographies.

Carden, Mary Panicia. "The Hobo as National Hero: Models for American Manhood in 'Steam Train' Maury Graham's Autobiography." *a/b: Auto/biography Studies* 11.1 (Spring 1996): 93–108.

Explores the subgenre of vagabond narratives.

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Conway, Martin A., Alan F. Collins, Susan E. Gathercole, and Stephan J. Anderson. "Recollections of True and False Autobiographical Memories." *Journal of Experimental Psychology* 125.1 (Mar. 1996): 69–95.

Tests two diarists for differences in their recollections of true and false events and thoughts recorded over seven months before.

Couellie, Judith Lutge. "(In)Continent I-lands: Blurring the Boundaries between Self and Other in South African Women's Autobiographies." *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature* 27.1 (Jan. 1996): 133–48.

Analyzes the construction of the self in modern South African women's autobiographies.

Cowell, Alan. "File Search Casts Light on Victims of Nazi Era." *New York Times* 9 Feb. 1997: 9.

Discusses how the records from Europe's concentration camps have provided missing pieces in the fragmented life stories of individuals and their families.

Daisey, Peggy. "Promoting Literacy in Secondary Content Area Classrooms with Biography Projects." *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy* 40.4 (Dec. 1996): 270–9.

Using biography projects in secondary school literacy classes proves an effective instruction strategy and increases student motivation.

Demos, Vasilikis. "Sojourning into the Field: Reflections on a Researcher's Experiences in Making Local-Global Connections among Women in Kytherian Greek Communities." *Sociological Focus* 29.1 (Feb. 1996): 1–13.

Explores subjectivity in social science and the relationship of autobiography to research by reflecting on six years of research into the construction of ethnicity among women of Kytherian Greek heritage.

Demuth, Peter W., and Arnold R. Bruhn. "The Use of the Early Memories Procedure in a Psychotherapy Group of Substance Abusers." *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology* 41.1 (Mar. 1997): 24–35.

Presents findings about the uses of EMP as an assessment tool and springboard for patients' treatment.

De Witt, Karen. "Once Villainous, Now Virtuous." *New York Times* 22 Dec. 1996, sec. 4: 10.

Describes the media's transformation of controversial personalities into cult heroes.

De Vries, Brian, and David Watt. "A Lifetime of Events: Age and Gender Variations in the Life Story." *International Journal of Aging and Human Development* 42 (1996): 81–102.

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Uses timelines to explore the significance of age and gender in determining past and future life stories.

Dobrenko, Evgeny. Tr. Jesse M. Savage. "(Autobio/Bio/Hagio)graphy: Or, Life as Genre: Alesha Peshov, Maksim Gorky, Mark Donskoi." *a/b: Auto/biography Studies* 11.2 (Fall 1996): 43–67.

Compares autobiographical, biographical, and hagiographical representations involving text and film.

Dow, Miriam C. "Autobiography: A Course That Never Fails." *English Journal* 85.6 (Oct. 1996): 85–9.

Argues for the benefits of autobiographical writing for her students.

Dowd, James J. "An Act Made Perfect in Habit: The Self in the Postmodern Age." *Current Perspectives in Social Theory* 16 (1996): 237–63.

Expands on the work of Erving Goffman and Emile Durkheim to explore the notions of the authentic self and biographical memory in postmodern social psychology and sociology.

Early, Gerry. "Mike's Brilliant Career." *Transition* 6.3 (1996): 46-59.

Uses celebiography to explore how people like Mike Tyson become almost "mythic" figures in their own lifetimes.

Fast, Piotr. "(Pseudo-)Autobiography in Brodsky's Lyrical Poetry." *a/b: Auto/biography Studies* 11.2 (Fall 1996): 125–39.

Argues that Brodsky uses the pragmatics of the text, not the semantics, to present his autobiography.

Fink, Gereon R., Hans J. Markowitsch, Mechthild Reinkemeier et al. "Cerebral Representation of One's Own Past: Neural Networks Involved in Autobiographical Memory." *Journal of Neuroscience* 16.13 (July 1996): 4275–82.

Presents current research on the neural networks involved in different types of autobiographical memory.

Fiol-Matta, Liza. "Writing the Self in a Changing World." *Women's Studies Quarterly* 24.3-4 (Fall 1996): 100–12.

Encourages the inclusion of autobiographical writing assignments in composition classes.

Flusin, Bernard. "L'Hagiographie palestinienne et la reception du Concile de Chalcedoine." *Deimon: Studies Presented to Lennart Tyden on His 55th Birthday*. Ed. Jan Olof Rosenquist. Uppsala: Acta U Upsaliensis, 1996.

Examines the early hagiographic tradition in the Middle East.

Frank, Geyla. "Life Histories in Occupational Therapy Clinical Practice." *American Journal of Occupational Therapy* 50.4 (Apr. 1996): 251–64.

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Compares narrative methods used to describe and interpret patients' lives for use in occupational therapy.

Gagnier, Regenia. "The Literary Standard, Working-Class Lifewriting, and Gender." *Textual Practice* 3.1 (Spring 1996): 36–55.

Compares working-class and women's autobiographies to traditional models.

Gall, Gilbert J., and Walter Weintraub. "Verbal Behavior and Personality Analysis in Historical Biography: Lee Pressman as a Test Cast." *Psychohistory Review* 24.3 (Spring 1996): 293–324.

Conducts a systematic analysis of the grammatical structure of a person's verbal behavior to augment other sources in constructing a biographical profile; uses C.I.O. counsel Pressman as a test case.

Gardner, Susan. "Not for Publication: Or, On Not (Yet, Anyway) Producing Bicultural Lumbee Auto-Ethnography." *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 8.2 (Summer 1996): 29–45.

Raises issues in the intersections of autobiography and ethnography.

Geesey, Patricia. "Collective Autobiography: Algerian Women and History in Assia Djebar's *L'amour, la fantasia*." *Dalhousie French Studies* 35 (1996): 153–67.

Uses a contemporary Algerian example to explore the collective aspect of women's autobiography.

Giblin, James Cross. "Writing Biographies for Young People." *The Writer* 110.4 (Apr. 1997): 7–9.

Asserts that today's students are able to deal with candid subject matter in biographies because of their exposure to the "realities" of life in the media.

Givens, John. "Vasilii Shukshin's *Liubavin Family* Chronicle and the Autobiographical Novel of Co-Consciousness." *a/b: Auto/biography Studies* 11.2 (Fall 1996): 105–24.

Shows how authors project inner conflicts on multiple fictional selves.

Goldberg, Diego. "The Arrow of Time." *New York Times Magazine* 2 Feb. 1997: 38–39.

Demonstrates through photographs how pictures taken throughout a person's life can serve as an unspoken record of identity formation.

Gornick, Vivian. "Why Memoir Now?" *Women's Review of Books* 13.10-11 (July 1996): 5.

Discusses the boom in memoir publications, explaining that while both memoirs and fiction share narrative strategies, memoirs require a reliable persona.

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Greenspan, Kate. "Autohagiography and Medieval Women's Spiritual Autobiography." *Gender and Text in the Later Middle Ages*. Ed. Jane Chance. Gainesville: U of Florida P, 1996. 216–36.

Examines the impact of medieval women's autobiographies on the hagiographic tradition.

Gregory, Jane. "Let's Get Personal." *New Scientist* July 27, 1996: 53.

Critiques biographies of famous scientists and philosophers (Darwin, Kepler, Russell, Einstein), showing how biographical work can illuminate the conditions in which their theories came about.

Guerra, Juan C. "'It Is As If My Story Repeats Itself': Life, Language, and Literacy in a Chicano 'Communidad.'" *Education and Urban Society* 29.1 (Nov. 1996): 35–53.

Notes how the life stories of some members of minority groups are indicative of the hardships suffered as a result of being isolated from the mainstream culture.

Guillaume, Jean-François. "These Stories That One Constructs and Tells. . . ." *Cahiers Internationaux de Sociology* 100 (1996): 59–89.

Uses Ricoeur's notions of temporality and narrativity to identify life-history narrative types.

Gunkel, Cassandra Stancil. "Nancy Riddick's Quilts: Autobiographical Statements." *Uncoverings: Research Papers of the American Quilt Study Group* 17 (1996): 1–28.

Analyzes the uses of quilts as marginalized autobiographical texts.

Hale, Frederick. "In the Tradition of Native American Autobiography? Janet Campbell Hale's *Bloodlines*." *Studies in American Indian Literature* 8.1 (Spring 1996): 68–80.

Uses Hale's work to discuss Native American autobiographical traditions.

Hammermeister, Kai. "Inventing History: Toward a Gay Holocaust Literature." *German Quarterly* 70.1 (Winter 1997): 18–26.

Because of the absence of a substantial body of gay Holocaust testimony, this study explores the important role of testimony in current literary practice.

Harris, Daniel. "Personals." *Antioch Review* 55.1 (Winter 1997): 6–24.

Speculates that many gay personal ads avoid self-revelation by emphasizing impersonal group stereotypes.

Henley, Paul. *Times Literary Supplement* 3 May 1997: 6–8.

Review of recent works that discuss the use of life-writing methodologies in anthropology.

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Hoagland, Edward. "Generational Pioneer." *New York Times Magazine* 8 Dec. 1996: 116.

Suggests that the life-writings of every family would reveal that each generation has its share of love, passion, and adventure.

Hojnik-Zupanc, Ida. "The Role of the Biographic Method in Social Gerontology." *Anthropos* 28 (1996): 154–58.

Explores the increasing use of biographical research to study individual aging processes and the collective subjectivity of age-group cohorts.

Hunt, Scott A., and Kimberly A. Miller. "The Discourse of Dress and Appearance: Identity Talk and a Rhetoric of Review." *Symbolic Interaction* 20.1 (Spring 1997): 69–82.

Examines how identities are constructed and maintained through talk about personal appearance and dress.

Janetta, A. E. "Anecdotal Humour in Maria Campbell's *Halfbreed*." *Journal of Canadian Studies* 31.2 (Summer 1996): 62–75.

Argues that the use of anecdotes in autobiographies, as links to the Other which mark difference and cultural identity, allow the minor and delegitimized to intrude successfully into major genres and thus decolonize narrative.

Jennings, Judi. "'My Mama Told Me': Reclaiming the Story in Oral History." *The History Teacher* 30.1 (Nov. 1996): 89–95.

Shows that the conventions of oral story telling can influence how history is written.

Johnston, Georgia. "Narratologies of Pleasure: Gertrude Stein's *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*." *Modern Fiction Studies* 42.3 (Fall 1996): 590–606.

Argues for the status of *Toklas* as experimental autobiography, extending the limits of text, identity, and narrativity, and refusing closure through its extratextual allusions.

Kanaley, Reid. "Your Cheatin' Hard Drive." *Philadelphia Inquirer Magazine* 4 Feb. 1996: 19–25.

Makes reference to computer genealogy clubs which enable people to track family and forebears on-line.

Kelly, Michael P., and Hilary Dickinson. "The Narrative Self in Autobiographical Accounts of Illness." *Sociological Review* 45.2 (May 1997): 254–78.

Analyzes patients' accounts of treatment in order to develop a sociological theory of the self.

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Keyser, James D. "Painted Bison Robes: The Missing Link in the Biographic Art Style Lexicon." *Plains Anthropologist* 41.155 (Feb. 1996): 29-52.

Examines robe art of the Northern Plains to develop a lexicon of biographic-style Indian art in rock, hide paintings, and ledger books.

Kimmelman, Michael. "Rescuing Picasso from the Myths." *New York Times* 8 Dec. 1996, sec. 2: 41.

Proves that there is an endlessly complex source of data on every well-documented celebrity.

Kiskis, Michael J. "Mark Twain and Collaborative Autobiography." *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 29.2 (Fall 1996): 27–40.

Throughout his later life, Twain "spoke" his life with anyone interested in recording his prospective biography (or autobiography?).

Koriat, Asher, and Morris Goldsmith. "Memory Metaphors and the Real-Life/Laboratory Controversy: Correspondence Versus Storehouse Conceptions of Memory." *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 19.2 (June 1996): 167–228.

Two theories of how autobiographic memory should be studied.

Kuchenhoff, Joachim. "Zum Stellenwart der Biographie in der Psychoanalyze." *Zeitschrift für Psychosomatische Medizin und Psychoanalyse* 42 (1996): 1–24.

Traces the changing use and understanding of autobiography in therapy since Freud.

Kupfer, Fern. "Everything But the Truth?" *Women's Review of Books* 13.10-11 (July 1996): 22.

Discusses ways in which creative nonfiction writers may reconstruct truth, rather than present total fictions.

Larson, Elizabeth A., and Shan-Pin C. Fanchiang. "Life History and Narrative Research: Generating a Humanistic Knowledge Base for Occupational Therapy." *American Journal of Occupational Therapy* 50.4 (Apr. 1996): 247–50.

Discusses the uses by occupational therapists of life history and narrative research.

Lawless, Elaine J. "Weaving Narrative Texts: The Artistry of Women's Sermons." *Journal of Folklore Research* 344.1 (Mar. 1997): 15–43.

Indicates that women pastors often reclaim their "her-stories" from the pulpit.

Lee, Hermione. "Biomythographers: Rewriting the Lives of Virginia Woolf." *Essays in Criticism* 15.2 (Apr. 1996): 95–114.

Compares biographical approaches to Virginia Woolf.

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Lipovetsky, Mark. "Self-Portrait on a Timeless Background: Transformations of the Autobiographical Mode in Russian Postmodernism." *a/b: Auto/biography Studies* 11.2 (Fall 1996): 140–62.
Presents a typology of Russian postmodern autobiography.

Lobel, Michael. "Warhol's Closet." *Art Journal* 55.4 (Winter 1996): 42–50.
Views the private side of a public figure by examining Warhol's penchant for collecting.

Loeb, Jeff. "Childhood's End: Self Recovery in the Autobiography of the Vietnam War." *American Studies* 37.1 (Spring 1996): 95–116.
Compares the various stages of war survivors' narratives with the life stories of trauma victims.

Lubar, Robert S. "Unmasking Pablo's Gertrude: Queer Desire and the Subject of Portraiture." *Art Bulletin* 79.1 (Mar. 1997): 57–84.
Because Stein eluded representation by conventional portraiture, Picasso chose to convey metaphorically the inner woman.

Mahiri, Jabari, and Soraya Sablo. "Writing for Their Lives: The Non-School Literacy of California's Urban African American Youth." *Journal of Negro Education* 65.2 (Spring 1996): 164–80.
Investigates how experiences from youth culture can serve as bridges for developing student writing skills.

Maiwald, Kai-Olaf. "The Reality of Life and Its Interpretation: On the Way to a Methodology of Biographical Research." *Soziologisches Revue* 19.4 (Oct. 1996): 465–73.
This review of nine German-language books on biographical methods in sociology explores the constructivist and rhetorical qualities of narrative and the paradoxes of self-representation to examine the methodological status of biographical narration and what makes it resonate beyond single cases.

Marquez, Antonio C. "Richard Rodriguez's *Hunger of Memory* and New Perspectives on Ethnic Autobiography." *Teaching American Ethnic Literatures: Nineteen Essays*. Ed. John R. Maitino and David R. Peck. Albuquerque: U of New Mexico P, 1996.
Uses Rodriguez's autobiographical works to approach issues in teaching ethnic literatures.

Marullo, Thomas Gaiton. "Revamping 'Family Chronicles': Ivan Bunin's *The Life of Arsen'ev*." *a/b: Auto/biography Studies* 11.2 (Fall 1996): 8–23.
Traces changes in the Russian "family chronicle" tradition.

Morris, Daniel. "'My Shoes': Charles Simic's Self-Portraits." *a/b: Auto/biography Studies* 11.1 (Spring 1996): 109-27.

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Addresses differences between autobiographical narratives presented in prose or poetry.

Murray, Julia K. "The Temple of Confucius and Pictorial Biographies of the Sage." *Journal of Asian Studies* 55.2 (May 1996): 269–301.

Examines pictorial biographies of Confucius from the late Ming period, their installation at the official Temple of Confucius, and their relationship to the development of an official cult using visual rhetoric intended to deify Confucius against a reinvigorated Buddhism

Mykhalovskiy, Eric. "Reconsidering Table Talk: Critical Thoughts on the Relationship between Sociology, Autobiography, and Self-Indulgence." *Qualitative Sociology* 19.1 (Spring 1996): 131–51.

Analyzes the relationship to autobiography and sociology of self-indulgence, showing its reliance on the conventions of traditional, masculine, academic discourse.

Nilsen, Ann. "Stories of Life—Stories of Living: Women's Narratives and Feminist Biography." *NORA: Nordic Journal of Women's Studies* 4 (1996): 16–30.

Brings together methodological debates in life story research and discussions within feminism about women's narratives and feminist biography.

O'Brien, Ellen. "No Rest for the Dead If Curiosity Beckons." *Philadelphia Inquirer* 23 June 1996, sec. G: 1, 6.

Many celebrated deceased are being exhumed to answer sundry questions about their past lives.

O'Keefe, Richard R. "Emerson's 'Montaigne; or, the Skeptic': Biography as Autobiography." *Essays in Literature* 23.2 (Fall 1996): 206–17.

Asserts that sometimes an author infuses a biography with too much of his own self-portrait.

Oldfield, Sybil. "The News from the Confessional: Some Reflections on Recent Autobiographical Writing by Women and Its Areas of Taboo." *Critical Survey* 8.3 (Sept. 1996): 296–305.

Explores why few women have written autobiographies that speak of being abused by their mothers or abusing their children.

Parthé, Kathleen. "The Rural Writer's Imagined Childhood: Poetry and Politics." *a/b: Auto/biography Studies* 11.2 (Fall 1996): 87–104.

Argues that Russian village prose adds an authentic peasant voice to the autobiographical tradition.

Piron, Florence. "Taking Responsibility for Oneself: Reflexivity and Individuation in the Life Story of a Young Quebec Woman." *Sociologie et Societes* 28.1 (Spring 1996): 119–34.

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Uses the autobiography of a 16-year-old Quebec girl to examine the development of the moral self, which is assumed to be spontaneously altruistic.

Podnieks, Elizabeth. "'Keep out / Keep out / Your snooting snout . . .': The Irresistible Journals of Elizabeth Smart." *a/b: Auto/biography Studies* 11.1 (Spring 1996): 56–82.

Explores Smart's diaries as an autobiography of female creativity.

Powell, David A. "Disease, Democracy, and Diary: George Sand's *Diary of a Traveller During the War*." *a/b: Auto/biography Studies* 11.1 (Spring 1996): 82–92.

Shows how Sand's diary interprets and connects her to her community.

Pon, Lisa. "Michaelangelo's Lives: Sixteenth-Century Books by Vasari, Condivi, and Others." *Sixteenth Century Journal* 27.4 (Winter 1996): 1015–28.

Examines sixteenth-century biographies of Michaelangelo to show how they created a public identity of him as a singular genius.

Pratt, Sarah. "Angels in the Stalinist House: Nadezhda Mandelstam, Lidiia Chukovskaia, Lidiia Ginzburg, and Russian Women's Autobiography." *a/b: Auto/biography Studies* 11.2 (Fall 1996): 68–87.

Aligns women's auto/biographical turn to the Other with both the Russian Orthodox and Marxist traditions of identifying with something beyond the self.

Quayson, Ato. "Wole Soyinka and Autobiography as Political Consensus." *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 31.2 (Fall 1996): 19–33.

Argues that Soyinka's auto/biographies self-consciously fuse fact and fiction, situating the political in a political unconscious.

Reese, Elaine, Catherine A. Haden, and Robyn Fivush. "Mothers, Fathers, Daughters, Sons: Gender Differences in Autobiographical Reminiscing." *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 29.1 (Feb. 1996): 27–56.

Compares how mothers and fathers reminisce with their children, and how the discussions differ depending on whether the child is a daughter or a son.

Reid, Roddey. "Foucault in America: Biography, 'Culture Wars,' and the New Consensus." *Cultural Critique* 35 (1996–97): 179–211.

Asks who a person really is based on the diversity of his writings and the divergent stories surrounding his public persona.

Robins, Ruth. "'Judas Always Writes the Biography': The Many Lives of Oscar Wilde." *Victorian Identities: Social and Cultural Formations in Nineteenth-Century Literature*. Ed. Ruth Robins, Julian Wolfreys, and James R. Kincaid. New York: St. Martin's, 1996.

Discusses variant readings of Oscar Wilde's biography.

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Rollyson, Carl. "Picking a Victim: A Biographer's Choice." *The Writer* 110.2 (Feb. 1997): 11–13, 44.

Suggests that the biographer virtually has carte blanche when it comes to revealing all there is to know about a given subject's life.

Rooney, Ellen. "What's the Story? Feminist Theory, Narrative, Address." *Differences* 8.1 (Spring 1996): 1–30.

Questions whether the feminist biographer inhabits someone else's life story or whether the subject in question becomes an extension of the biographer.

Sayre, Gordon. "Defying Assimilation, Confounding Authenticity: The Case of William Apess." *a/b: Auto/biography Studies* 11.1 (Spring 1996): 1–19.

Focuses on a new edition of a pre-1850 Native American autobiography to suggest ways of reading Native American texts.

Schmidt, Elizabeth. "Imagining Emily." *New York Times Book Review* 2 Mar. 1997: 31.

Asserts that the void left behind by the mysterious private life of Dickinson has provided endless fodder for the speculative creativity of her successors.

Serviss, Naomi Freedman. "Confronting Survivors Proves a Painful Ordeal." *Philadelphia Inquirer* 30 June 1996, sec. H: 1 & 6.

Describes the delicate and demanding skills necessary to interview Holocaust survivors.

Shapira, Anita. "Historiography and Memory: Latrun, 1948." *Jewish Social Studies* 3.1 (Fall 1996): 20–61.

This article on Zionist history defines collective memory as a "picture of reality present in the public imagination at a given moment."

Siegel, Paul F. "The Meaning of Behaviorism for B. F. Skinner." *Psychoanalytic Psychology* 13.3 (Summer 1996): 343–65.

A psychobiographical reading of B. F. Skinner's *Autobiography* using Tomkins's "script theory" to connect Skinner's life and work.

Slote, Ben. "Revising Freely: Frederick Douglass and the Politics of Disembodiment." *a/b: Auto/biography Studies* 11.1 (Spring 1996): 19–38.

Discusses issues of embodiment in Douglass's autobiography.

Storhoff, Gary. "Slaying the Father: The Autobiography of Chester Himes." *a/b: Auto/biography Studies* 11.1 (Spring 1996): 38–55.

Traces the impact in the African American autobiographical tradition of Oedipal rebellion against authority figures and the constraints of genre.

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Stanley, Liz. "The Mother of Invention: Necessity, Writing, and Representation." *Feminism and Psychology* 6.1 (Feb. 1996): 45–51.

Proposes "intellectual autobiography" as a useful means for addressing questions about power, representation, epistemology, and referentiality that does not accept conventional foundationalist views of a single, seamless reality.

Suedfeld, Peter, and Susan Bluck. "Cognitive Concomitants of Life Events: Finding a Balance Between Generalizability and Contextualization." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 71.4 (Oct. 1996): 781–84.

Opposes an extreme contextualist analysis of life experiences, arguing that such a position makes any generalization impossible and replaces scientific investigation with biography or autobiography.

Suleiman, Susan Rubin. "Criticism and the Autobiographical Voice." *Field Work: Sites in Literary and Cultural Studies.* New York: Routledge, 1996. 256–61.

Explores the infusion of autobiographical aspects in criticism.

Tichenor, Mercedes, and Mary Jean Jewell. "A Framework for Using Journal Writing in the Primary Grades." *Reading Improvement* 33.2 (Summer 1996): 81–87.

Provides suggestions for improving writing skills for the youngest life-writers.

Varner-Gunn, Janet. "A Window of Opportunity: An Ethics of Reading Third-World Autobiography." *Teaching and Testimony: Rigoberta Menchu and the North American Classroom.* Ed. Webb Allen Carey and Stephen Benz. Albany: SUNY P, 1996. 271–78.

Uses Menchu's autobiography to develop an ethic for reading similarly situated texts.

Velleman, J. David. "Self to Self." *Philosophical Review* 105.1 (Jan. 1996): 39–76.

Muses about the ways in which the study of a biographical subject incorporates a view of both the viewer and the viewed.

Wear, D. "Special Series on Girls and Women in Education: Beyond Silences and Scripts—the Variety of Feminist Experiences." *Curriculum Inquiry* 26.3 (Fall 1996): 307–20.

Uses autobiographical theorizing to weave together personal narratives from within and without the academy, to illuminate events in the life of an academic woman.

Weingarten, Kathy, and Miranda Eve Weingarten Worthen. "A Narrative Approach to Understanding the Illness Experiences of a Mother and Daughter." *Families, Systems, and Health* 15 (1997): 41–54.

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Introduces three narrative concepts in an attempt to analyze the experiences of one family coping with illness.

Wenger, Beth S. "Memory as Identity: The Invention of the Lower East Side." *American Jewish History* 85.1 (Mar. 1997): 3–27.

Discusses how a place can be imbued with the freight of group identity.

White, Curtis. "Writing the Life Postmodern." *Review of Contemporary Fiction*. 16.1 (Spring 1996): 112–21.

Explores postmodern autobiographical theory and practice.

Wilhelm, Sabine, Richard J. McNally, Lee Baer, and Irmela Florin. "Autobiographical Memory in Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder." *British Journal of Clinical Psychology* 36.1 (Fall 1997): 21–31.

Uses autobiographical memories as a basis for assessing patients with OCD disorders.

Williams, Hugo. "Freelance." *Times Literary Supplement* 4 Oct. 1996: 20.

The author parleys with the ghosts of literary greats in London.

Zussman, Robert. "Autobiographical Occasions." *Contemporary Sociology* 25.2 (Mar. 1996): 43–48.

Review of eleven books on autobiography as a sociological method.

Dissertations

Apgar, Sonia Colette. "Writing (For) Our Lives: (Auto)Biography As Contestatory Practice." U of Minnesota, 1996.

Considers sociolinguistic theories of the role of narrative in establishing and presenting a coherent self, and links life-writing to composition theory.

Blackwell, Mark Raymond. "The Properties of the Self: Idioms of Personal Identity from Locke to Boswell." Cornell U, 1996.

By looking at Locke, Swift, Hume, Boswell, and Charles Johnstone, examines the explicit interest in personal identity beginning in the late seventeenth century, and the development of self-consciousness and personal identity as philosophical problems.

Cook, Brad L. "Demosthenes and His Biographers." U of Washington, 1996.

Analyzes biographies of Demosthenes, focusing on Lives from first to tenth century A.D. and their varying literary and social contexts.

Decker, James M. "Spiral Form and Henry Miller's Anecdotal Life." Northern Illinois U, 1996.

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Traces Miller's development of a new genre, the auto-novel, which allowed him to present his innermost self "truthfully," while distorting both internal and external facts of his life.

Dodge, Georgina. "Recovering Acts in American Im/Migrant Autobiography." UCLA, 1996.

In light of Werner Sollors's work on ethnic autobiography, examines the autobiographical strategies used by Etsu Inagaki Sugimoto, Ernesto Galarza, Richard Wright, and Ved Mehta to maintain links with their previous identities and cultures.

Fletcher, Maris J. "Great Autobiographies of the Western World." U of Arkansas, 1996.

Selects and analyzes nineteen of the best autobiographies, offers a perspective on the lives of the autobiographers, and compares the widely varying merits of the texts.

Holmes, Steven Jon. "'Blessed Home': Nature, Religion, Science, and Human Relationship in the Early Life of John Muir." Harvard U, 1996.

Develops a new approach to environmental biography to reinterpret the early life of John Muir.

Klucznik, Kenneth. "I Am Talking About Me." Indiana U, 1996.

Considers the relation of self to language in autobiographical works by Stendhal, Nietzsche, and Kingston, and theoretical works by Eakin, de Man, Lacan, and Derrida.

Lange, Teresa Tetrick. "The Man Freud: An Historical Novel." Duke U, 1996.

Uses an intimate, personal, fictional account of several months in Freud's life in 1923 to develop a way of writing a biography based on psychoanalysis and intuition, like Freud's work on Moses.

McLean, Jacqueline Annette Kolosov. "Writing Women's Lives: A Study of Victorian Women's Auto/Biography." New York U, 1996.

Cuts across the distinctions between biography, autobiography, diary, and fiction in exploring how women's lives are imagined and written in the Victorian period.

Nodland, Cynthia. "Life History Narrative: June W. Kounin, Jungian Analyst, 1916–1995." Union Institute, 1996.

Uses the life story of an American woman, who chose a professional career as a Jungian analyst, to provide historical and political perspective on the changes in women's roles and opportunities in this century.

Skoda, Richard James, Jr. "The Biographical Approach to History: A Theoretical and Practical Examination of Its Applicability in the Classroom." Illinois State U, 1996.

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Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri
Develops methodologies for using biography to teach secondary school American and world history, and tests their effectiveness.

Tolliver, Willie, Jr. "A Self Among Others: Henry James as a Biographer." U of Chicago, 1996.

Explores James's writings about and ambivalent relationship to the art of biography, and the innovations to the genre in his own biographies of Hawthorne and William Wetmore Story.

Toner, Jennifer Dilalla. "Imaginary Portraits: The Fictional Life-Narrative in America from Brown to Melville." Johns Hopkins U, 1996.

Argues that fictional life-narratives serve as a metabiography for their authors.

Verney, Victor Vincent, Jr. "John Brown: Cultural Icon in American Mythos." SUNY Buffalo, 1996.

Examines John Brown as a cultural icon, using biographies and meta-literature on Brown to address cultural issues and the continuing impact on U.S. culture of Puritan teleology and "sacred violence."

White, Paul Stuart. "Making a 'Man of Science': The Boundaries of Scientific Identity and Learned Community in the Life of Thomas Huxley." U of Chicago, 1996.

Uses the life of Thomas Huxley to explore the construction of the Victorian "man of science" persona.

Wood, Jeanne Kristina. "'Females Eminently Exemplary': The Literary Woman in Exemplary Biographic Collections in England, 1750–1830." York U, 1996.

Argues for a new history of English biographical collections of literary women published between 1750 and 1830.

Wood, Laura Matysek. "Hitler in Print: A View by British and American Scholars." Texas Christian U, 1996.

Explores the failure of biographies to fully explain and comprehend Hitler, and thus bring his life to closure.

Wye, Melissa Jean. "From Hyannisport to Hollywood: A Critical Theory Approach to the Development of the Candidate Bio Film in Modern Politics." U of Southern California, 1996.

Analyzes the contribution the Kennedy family, staff, and collaborators made to forging a Presidential image, creating a new genre of biodocumentary campaign film, and establishing a format for manipulating visual images to build a public image.

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Addenda to Previous Years' Bibliographies

Books

Adams, Kathleen. *Mightier Than the Sword*. New York: Warner Books, 1994.

Describes how journal writing enables men to identify and express their feelings.

Basso, Ellen B. *The Last Cannibals: A South American Oral History*. Austin: U of Texas P, 1995.

Shows the ways in which storytellers, translators, and commentators have acquainted "outsiders" with the lives of Kalapalo people. [*Reviewed* in Biography 20.2.]

Bergmann, Emilie L., and Paul Julian Smith, eds. *¿Entiendes? Queer Readings, Hispanic Writings*. Durham: Duke UP, 1995.

Part Four explores "Biographical Connections, Textual Encodings."

Brand, Dionne. *No Burden to Carry: Narratives of Black Working Women in Ontario, 1920s–1950s*. Toronto: Women's Press, 1991.

Uses minority narratives to help rewrite the history of Canada.

Committee on Women's Studies in Asia, ed. *Changing Lives: Life Stories of Asian Pioneers in Women's Studies*. New York: Feminist Press at CUNY, 1995.

Thirteen women from eleven Asian countries describe the importance of feminism in their lives.

Donnelly, Nancy D. *Changing Lives of Refugee Hmong Women*. Seattle: U of Washington P, 1994.

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Biography: The First Twenty Years

Mark Panek and Damon Chong

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Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus (Faber).
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North, John, and Roger North (Cochrane).

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O'Neill, Eugene (Black).
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P

Pacifism and life-writing ("Seville"; Summy).

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Paine, Thomas (Kiley).

Painting, illustration, photography, and life-writing. See Beardsley; Burne-Jones; Copley; Dove; Gérard; Kennington; Li; Richter; Stieglitz; Van Gogh; Watteau.

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Philosophers. See Chevalier; Marx; Rousseau; Russell.
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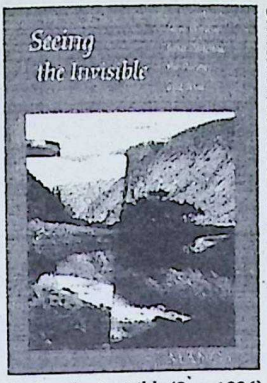

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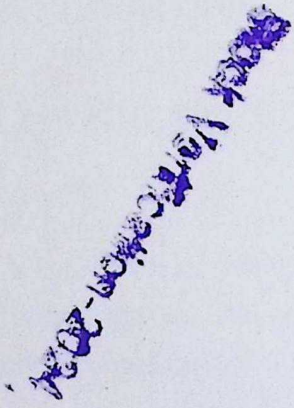

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